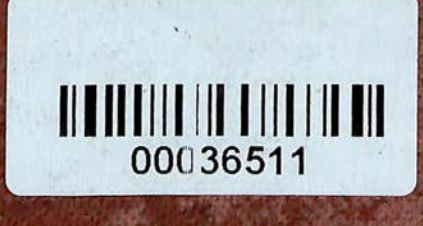
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BRITAIN AND THE WAR

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BY

ANDRÉ CHEVRILLON

WITH A PREFACE BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

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FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

"BRITAIN and the War" was first published as a series of articles in the *Revue de Paris* from November 1915 to January 1916. It deals with a phase of England's war effort and life which may now be considered as closed. Some of the facts recorded here (for instance, what we say of England's first success against the German submarines) have even ceased to be true—though this too may be but a transient phase. Yet in the period described here arose the forces which make England's present achievements possible—arose changes in her modes of thought and life, which will affect the whole of her future. What makes the eighteen months with which this book is specially concerned the essential period in the English history of the war, is that it is characterised by facts, chiefly psychological. England's awakening to the unexpected and tremendous reality of the war; her gradual discovery of her enemy's deadly hatred and purpose; the rising and spreading of the idea that in time of national peril, military service is a duty for every able-bodied Englishman; the appeal to the individual conscience; the working of the mind which resulted in millions voluntarily taking the pledge; the dead weight of old traditions, habits, and prejudices; the cross and counter-currents of class and party ideas, whose acquired momentum could not,

in a free democracy like England, but persist for some time and interfere with the general effort at adaptation; finally, the fusion of all tendencies into one collective will and movement, enabling the State to organise the country for national service and culminating in the law of conscription:—such facts belong to the spiritual order, to that life of the soul from which spring all the material acts and productions of men. In human affairs, somebody said, the deepest view is reached when we consider them, not as appearances but as decisions. And Mr. H. G. Wells, quoting this saying in his *Future in America*, added that the essential factor in the destiny of a nation lies in the form of its Will, the quality and quantity of its Will. The history of Germany's will to war began long before the war; but the history of England's will to war (this book may contribute to make it quite clear) only began with the war, and we may say that the essential part of the narrative ends at the passing of the Conscription Bill. After that, the psychological condition of England is very much the same as that of the other great belligerents. Her part of the story becomes purely material, industrial and military; she goes on fighting, she perfects her weapons and methods: the will is formed and cannot change.

Of the rise and growth of her will this little book gives a rapid sketch. That the model was moving under our eyes whilst it was being pencilled was a disadvantage which has perhaps its compensations.

ANDRÉ CHEVRILLON.

January 25, 1917.

PREFACE

THIS book, by my friend, André Chevrillon, tells how England met and is taking the strain of the war.

It is, of course, difficult for outsiders to comprehend the organically intimate relation which has grown up between France and England during the last two years. Necessity, at first, and later the habit of common effort, brought about this fusion till, to-day, mutual love and trust are so taken for granted that we have almost ceased to think about them. But as between man and wife, so between the nations whom this war has joined together, the mystery and the wonder of the union remains unsubdued. Each asks himself "What in essence is this other soul to whose hands I entrust my life and honour through all chances? What springs move it? What Gods possess it? Above all, to

what power does it refer when it needs that help which no mortal can give ? " Monsieur Chevrillon answers these questions, with the knowledge of the psychologist and the profound sympathy of one long acquainted with our lives, our history, and the expression, formal or idiomatic, of our thoughts.

If all his conclusions are not flattering to our self-esteem, the fault is not with him.

He draws an accurate picture of a people almost as aggressively educated and organised for extravagant peace as were the Germans for the extravagances of war—blind and deaf to visible menace and reiterated warning, and still further weakened by German agency which had, of set design, exploited and infected as much as it could among English journalism, finance, and politics to confuse, delay and disorganise counsel and action. We realise now that the enemy before the war laboured to some purpose in the fruitful soil of our national weaknesses and prejudices. How far they went, who were their dupes and who their accomplices, will be passed upon later, but, two years ago, England saw very little and imagined less of these

things. Admitting it would have been impossible for any civilisation, at that time, to have conceived the German as he has now revealed himself, we must recall that far the larger section of English intellectual leadership and political opinion had, for many years, given itself with passion to a world of strictly insular outlook which not only disregarded, but took for its doctrine and its shibboleth to deny, the very possibility of war. If facts did not conform to their view, so much the worse for the facts and for those who reported them. As M. Chevrillon says with illuminating insight of that vanished England, it was a land of "Governments too dependent upon popular opinion not to follow instead of leading it; of politicians too concerned for popular reforms—their sole reason for existence—to recognise the most pressing actualities; of a democracy too wrapped up in its dreams, passions, and party strife to see the coming of its aggressor."

To such a community an instant choice between peace and war was presented out of a holiday sky, at the sword's point,

over the body of Belgium. England, as a whole, knew nothing of the situation which Germany had scientifically prepared for her undoing. One might say that outside her Navy she possessed relatively little more than certain ancestral instincts of right and wrong—that implanted conscience which, as M. Chevrillon says, will save her. Germany, he explains, had a double reason for counting on the inaction of the land she regarded as her future prey. She believed that her methodical propaganda in commercial, labour and dissenting circles would have enfeebled England's moral strength to her ends. Nor did it enter her mind that a people who had so clearly willed not to arm themselves for war would arm for duty's sake. Here, it seems to me, M. Chevrillon omits a third point which has always been a factor in Germany's reckoning—England's secular dependence upon the Navy, and her equally ancient habit of regarding it as her main contribution to all emergencies. However this may be, the incredible, from the German point of view, happened. England went to war, literally and coldly, on a point

of conscience. She could not have done otherwise.

Some day we may learn with what appallingly insignificant material backing, her land forces were committed to the work. M. Chevrillon traces our initial unpreparedness in this respect. The sea-power that unites and upholds, comes less within his study, even as the guardian fleets themselves are veiled from men's sight. He deals step by step with the gradual awakening of a people who were at first no more than resolute for war as the sole means to adjust intolerable wrong. He shows how, later, when they had seen all known standards of evil-doing overtopped by a power that stood outside humanity—when, as he says, they had "recommenced to believe in the Devil" —they addressed themselves to its overthrow in much the same sombre temper as a man self-convinced of sin brings all body, soul and mind to his struggle for redemption. And that view of our attitude is a just if, as he argues throughout, England has since her origin been rather a natural growth than any designed product

of conscious thought on the part of a few clever individuals. Her people have accepted little from without, and have instinctively cut down that little to the barest needs of any situation which imposed itself. Spiritually as well as intellectually and physically, England has been slow to take that thought which is supposed to add a cubit to the national stature. What came to her of power came as growth to a tree —unsystematically, but visibly accommodated to the experience of wind and weather, cumbered with many excrescences, yet in every fibre alive and the home of free and variegated lives.

Knowledge, pure intelligence and the like, England in her heart has never reckoned among her first values. Her achievements along these lines have placed her in the forefront of spiritual civilisation, yet to all appearance, and possibly in all truth, this has been an accident as huge and as puzzling to the world without as the accretion of her inexplicable Empire.

On what then does our national structure rest, since it obviously lacks reason

and logic as those are understood elsewhere? M. Chevrillon answers, upon sheer character and morals—adherence to an elementary standard of right and wrong, judged for himself by the individual concerned. In his own words: "Le principe, d'origine politique et protestante, c'est que l'Anglais, parce qu'il a conquis par un effort séculaire ses libertés sur le pouvoir central, et parce qu'il est responsable envers Dieu de tous ses actes, gouverne lui-même sa personne et sa vie."

To this point he returns again and again as the ultimate secret of England for good or evil. Out of this spirit, jealous of control and stubborn of belief, were born those multitudes who went silently to arms under pressure of their own convictions in the first year of the war. They had few aids to enthusiasm, and of stage-management on the part of the State there was none. The conception of a State omnipotent for war did not exist. Even the recruiting appeals of the posters, rightly examined, are, for the most part, in the nature of reproaches to the defaulter or hints of the punishment his conscience will

presently deal out to him if he does not answer the summons. The State from the continental point of view hardly comes into the picture until the people's sense of right and wrong tardily persuades it that it would be but justice to enact conscription.

Monsieur Chevrillon's analysis of the national mind—especially the chapters on "The Appeal to Conscience"—is nearer the root of the matter than anything that has yet been written by any Englishman. One may say that he lays too much stress on the puritan and religious side of it—those very qualities whose defects have been so subtly used by the enemy, and in time past have laid us open to the charge of hypocrisy. Yet, when the blow fell, the people as a whole acted on those qualities rather than any intellectual promptings. Immemorially trained to refer all thought and deed to certain standards of right and wrong which, they held, lay equally on all men, they had to deal with an enemy for whom right and wrong do not exist except as the State decides. Small wonder that, at first, they realised neither themselves nor that enemy.

France, by experience burned into her enduring soul, knew, remembered, and in great part stood organised against possibilities. England grew to the needs of the case, inarticulate as always, and, once again, with the defects of her qualities well to the front. Inarticulate she was, since the ornate expression of sentiment has never been practised by any class; and the same spiritual motive which leads a man to enlistment as though it were a religious conversion, makes his nation slower to insist on what it has done than what is left undone. This attitude is misleading; but crisis cannot change character. If we are good shopkeepers, we have always been bad window-dressers. So the carefully circulated legend, first that England could give no help to her Allies, and secondly, that she was giving as little as she could, must be allowed to die out in slaughter and disillusionment.

For obvious reasons, the author does not deal except in general terms with England's war-work; but shows us with an insight and affection few others possess the very pulse of the machine—the spirit that

created the effort. His analysis is brought up to the end of 1915 only. Not a little blood has flowed since that date and the land's temper whose birth and growth he traces has set and hardened. We know now that the issues involved will not be served by any such "victories" as closed any war of the past; that we, with our Allies, have to destroy not only a visible world of evil but the whole unspeakable system of thought that begot and engineers it. This we have learned as we have learned everything else in our history, by direct experience, each man for himself, often in the teeth of preconceived opinion. Our knowledge is being put into practice with the weight of the whole people behind it, and none can foretell how far the momentum of that mass will drive. M. Chevrillon hints that had the enemy done other than he has done, observed, for instance, some measure of decency in his dealings or thrown even a gloss of words over them, England might have put out less than her full strength, and eventually, perhaps, have come to some accommodation with him. Myself, I think this would only have slowed

the war a little; but that question has been settled for us by the enemy's choice of methods, so that our present temper bears as little relation to the temper in which we entered the war as it will bear to the temper in which we shall close our account.

It will be profoundly interesting to read, when it comes to be written, M. Chevrillon's record and judgment of this rebirth.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

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BRITAIN AND THE WAR

INTRODUCTION

Of all the circumstances of the war in which the destiny of the chief nations of the world, and no doubt of humanity itself, is at stake, the most astonishing, perhaps, to posterity, will be the failure of all the nations which Germany intended to attack, to foresee the event. That Europe, on the eve and during the early stages of the French Revolution, did not foresee the eruption which for the space of twenty years submerged her in its fiery flood, is not difficult to understand: that revolution was an incalculable cataclysm, bringing in its train an infinite series of inevitable results that sprang from no concerted plan. But for the lightning attack which was to cast the continent and then the world at her feet, Germany had long been preparing her plans, her armies and weapons, and this without any concealment. Publicists, leaders of naval and colonial leagues, military writers, professors, and even theologians proclaimed or justified her ambition, demonstrating the right of war and of force, and investigating ways and means. Immediately after the Agadir affair the newspapers, which only say what the

Government desires, began to utter threats; and for years past it has been quite clear that they have been occupied in stirring up against the Triple Entente, and especially against England, hatred and contempt. Towards Russia on the question of the small Slavonic nations, towards France in the matter of Morocco, Austro-German policy has been aggressive. Each time the attempt was made to win a position or to inflict an affront merely by the threat of the sword, and the attempt was successful. In the Reichstag the leaders of three great parties gave violent expression to their hostility towards England, and the Crown Prince had been seen to attend the sitting in order to applaud them publicly. Not only did Germany reject sarcastically every proposal of disarmament, but to the burdens of a military establishment already formidable and superior to that of France, and of a navy quite useless if it were not intended one day to defy the maritime power of England, she added fresh and mighty armaments. That so much force and will to conquer should have been visibly accumulated against the two great nations of the West, and that, meanwhile, the one should have remained absorbed in party quarrels springing from metaphysical disputes (one of our ministers went, a few years ago, to the very root of the discussion, when he declared in a public speech "that miracles do not exist"); that the other, led by idealists blind to reality and to the signs of the outer world, should have concentrated all thoughts and efforts on a programme of constitutional reforms and social legislation

which the party in power hoped to finance at the expense of the military resources of the country—in a word, that the first flash of the rising storm should have illuminated a France absorbed in the Caillaux trial, and an England on the eve of the civil war towards which she was being led by her pacifists, these are facts which future generations will probably think scarcely credible.

France, at least, having once had experience of the danger, retained some idea of it. She possessed a weapon of defence which she kept in fairly good order in accordance with her traditions and administrative routine, without making it the main object of her efforts and thoughts. She had even, in order to set a good example, begun to diminish at the same time its power and its expense. But, in the face of the last sudden and decisive increase of the German army she had been forced to return (every one knows how reluctantly, and what an interminable discussion there was about it) to the Three Years' Service. Against the sudden attack by which the Germans hoped to establish themselves opposite her coast, and to point a dagger at her heart, England had made no preparations. Not envying or hating any one, she had no suspicion of the hatred and envy of Germany. It seemed to her incredible that a neighbouring people, whom she thought she knew, and who appeared very similar to herself, could take it into its head, in the twentieth century, to draw the political map of the world afresh. The division of the world was a settled matter: all that remained was for each nation to organise her

share of the world for the reign of justice, happiness and enlightenment. The Radical Government existed only to maintain order and peace by democratic methods; that was the primary and essential end of its being. Mr. Asquith's cabinet was a continuation of that of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, which sprang from the reaction against the Boer War. So opposed were the Radicals to Imperialist and Militarist ideals that they were called "Little Englanders." They began by restoring to the Boers almost everything which the war had taken from them: in a word, the chief power in South Africa. Towards Germany, which kept on increasing her navy and whose alarms and excursions periodically filled Europe with trepidation, this party, the party in power, made repeated advances. The Entente was displeasing to the Germans: it endeavoured to reduce the meaning and the import of the Entente. Several times over, its leaders, who formed the Government, attempted to disarm Germany morally by beginning to disarm England materially. They believed for a long time that to propose a Hague Conference was an efficient reply to each hostile movement. The only thing, according to these pacifists, was to convert Germany to pacifism. It is the very irony of fate that humanitarians, fervent believers in democracy, men like Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey, of whom it is as certain as of Jaurès that they stood specially for the lofty ideals of peace and social progress, should have found themselves all at once burdened with

the conduct of the most terrible war in history; that the men of the budget of 1910, the champions of the people against the Lords, the authors of a legislation tending towards socialism, the defenders of Free Trade, the opponents of Imperialism should now be busy extracting from their country the greatest powers possible for destruction, blockading and starving Germany, and, in a word, that it should now be the special function of a Lloyd George to manufacture man-slaughtering machines. And it is another irony that sixty-five million Germans should be firmly convinced that these pure idealists were slyly wishing and preparing for war, and that a Sir Edward Grey was a gaunt Mephistopheles inciting to murder, in the service of a grabbing England who dreamt only of defending her trade. In the face of such distortions of the real it seems as though nations were led by dreams; and when it is recognised how blind to the real were both our rationalists and those of England, one cannot but wonder whether rationalism itself is not also a kind of dream. This, perhaps, is the most fundamental lesson of the war. Once again, it reveals what all history teaches: the omnipotence of the irrational, the incalculable forces which lie latent whilst the daily order, the usual peacefulness of things seems established for ever, but whose sudden awakening, whose terrific explosion, changes for a new period the face of the world. Because Germany has long been pregnant with the war, because morally and mechanically she has prepared for it, a study bearing the title Germany and

the War would be the history of a deliberate will, aiming at realisation, and previous, therefore, to the war. It would be necessary, in order to write it, to go far beyond the present event, to go back to 1813 and 1806, perhaps even to the first kings and to the very origins of Prussia; and by the time the beginning of the war would be reached, the essential would have been told.

Because on the contrary England did not want war, because it was forced on her, a study of England and the war is mainly the history of the reactions of this people to the accomplished fact. No doubt it is necessary to glance at previous history, but what we then have to note is what is lacking: previous history consists of negatives: England did not foresee . . . England was not anxious . . . England did not prepare. . . . Positive history only begins at the end of July 1914. Then does this country awake to the danger, then does she discover her enemy, and gradually she changes her habits, she gathers herself together, she adapts herself to the new circumstances and she arms.

Another difference between these two studies would correspond to the essential psychological differences between the two nations. In order to understand the German meaning of the war books alone are almost sufficient. Everything was worked out, everything was written down beforehand: Treitschke, Bernhardi, Von der Goltz, the publications of the Pan-Germans, the manual of the customs of war, state the reasons, the object, the methods. The whole idea is there, defined in

every detail, from the enthusiastic memories of the Holy Roman Empire down to the scheme of a future European Federation under the hegemony of Germany, from the argument of the superiority of race and its mystic influence down to the plan of attack with its flanking movement through western Flanders, and its pivot in Lorraine, from the thesis which declares morality and treaties subordinate to the absolute power of the State, to that which makes "frightfulness" a legitimate military principle. The reason is that, as we have long known, in Germany everything first exists theoretically; the ideal is first set up clear and complete, directing deductively the patient will which then works to force, bit by bit, the real into the required form. Hence the German scorn for the real which—even when it is a question of "colonising" part of France and first "emptying" it—even when it is a question of cutting up and then piecing Europe together again like a mere Congo State, and finally of upsetting the British Empire—they affect to regard with scorn, as mere matter, which can be compelled to assume the preconceived shape. However, it is not always sufficient merely to accumulate force in order to manipulate objects of such magnitude: it may be important first of all to have formed an accurate estimate of them. The German idea, inflamed with pride and passion, hides reality from sight and blots it out: we now know the England which the German professors have invented in the place of the real England. And we have heard also of the animal which one of them once evolved

out of his own inner consciousness. The German metaphysical camel has now revealed itself as a calamity for the whole world. It seems likely this time to be one for Germany too.

No intellectual process could be more totally opposed to this than the one which is natural to Germany's English cousins. In England thought works on empirical and inductive lines: reality engenders and controls the ideal; the latter is not the theoretic simplification of the former, often distorting it out of all resemblance under the pretence of abstracting its essential nature and making it clearer. Thought repeats reality bit by bit, with every feature of its visible and living nature, and with all its contingent and complex diversity. And similarly the English will is, above all, a power of adaptation to this reality: an adaptation which takes place only by degrees, which is modest because patient, often discontinuous, corrected gradually under the continual teaching of circumstances, and which is persistently pursued through all obstacles and in spite of all disappointments. This is the history of England's present effort, and it is the whole history of this nation, of its growth, of its extension over the planet, of its successes, of its miraculous Empire, which the Germans affect to despise as incoherent, decaying, incapable of survival, because so great a success has sprung from a principle which is the very opposite of their own, not from a central and creative *a priori* idea, but, according to them, from accident, from luck—because this Empire has been built no one knows

exactly how, piecemeal, without any systematic design, irrationally, so they say, but in reality in accordance with the process of life itself.

A condition of this process is time, and this, through good luck which is not altogether unconnected with their insular position, has never failed the English, not less in this war than in other critical moments of their history; but this time they really counted on it too much. Natural adaptation to environment is slow and, moreover, fragmentary; it stops, it starts again: now one organ then another is adjusted; new armies may spring up, almost as if by magic, before factories have been organised for the production of arms and munitions. Some invisible psychological forces may accelerate the effort, others may retard it. Thus the effort and the working of the spirit which creates it cannot be studied methodically, like the productions of German thought and will: there is no theory to be examined, no principle to be grasped and then followed out in its necessary and mutually connected developments. Here it is a question of observing the answer of a certain organism to the external danger which threatens it. In order to understand and explain it nothing more is required than to proceed in the simple English fashion, by observation and narration, noting actions and reactions, following many roads, but first referring to the past—a very recent past—in order to see the necessity arise and the first efforts at adaptation. Almost at once, in the external phenomena as in the most hidden causes,

a remarkable element is noticeable, which can be isolated but scarcely defined, and which colours with a quite peculiar tint all the threads of this history —that is, as it were, a certain universal and entirely spiritual characteristic which seems to be the very essence of England. Such a study leads one into the deeper psychology of a nation. It is the special feature of this war that the nations engaged in it—nations which, viewed superficially, seem to belong to the same civilisation—reveal as never before, their secret and absolute differences.

February 1916.

PUBLIC OPINION

In London, in June 1915, in those streets which are as busy as ever, where the only sign of war is the number of men in khaki, it seemed as if some moments of the past were rising once more: Mafeking night, the Coronation of Edward VII, his funeral, the agitations for and against the House of Lords, for and against Mr. Lloyd George's famous budget. How could one fail to think of it? Under such similar appearances I knew that life had been revolutionised, all its rhythms, all its landmarks and tendencies altered by one engrossing idea, by an effort which was beginning to draw into itself all the forces of the country. One's mind was ever looking backward, seeking the mistakes, the neglected signs, and wondering how the surprise had come about.

At Westminster, on the Embankment, along which I often passed, the picturesque uproar of bands, picture posters and recruiting speeches reminded me forcibly of the merry din of trumpets, bills and election harangues in 1910. The same spirit was revealed in both—a naïve, boyish, energetic spirit, in love with bright and glaring colours, but also with sentiment and morality—a spirit so very serious in its depths. At that period, this

nation, whose movements are ever behind those of the rest of the world, and which adapts itself to outer changes only under the pressure of events (it still reckons by ounces, inches and farthings), this great nation was passing, after 1832, after 1867 and 1884, through a new stage of its revolution. With the Boer War the national mind had completed one of its long periodical oscillations. From the dream of Imperialism which Kipling had sung, together with the strength, the conscience and the will power of England, the nation was returning to an ideal of justice and reason: justice and reason that stand not for one nation alone, but for all mankind. Against the fictions, prejudices, traditions, illogicalities by which England strives to maintain her ancient form and the ruling class to perpetuate its ascendancy, new thinkers, poets, playwrights and novelists, a Wells, a Shaw, a Chesterton, a Galsworthy, were directing their sarcastic challenges, tearing off all the veils, urging and compelling their countrymen to look through and beyond the old English conventions at the face of truth, of all truths, and especially at the hidden and seamy side of society and life from which they strive, both by instinct and systematically, to turn away their eyes. This general spiritual movement was having an effect on practical affairs, inspiring a prolonged effort in the direction of political and social reform. A new system of taxation had been introduced, the purpose of which was not only to put the burden on acquired wealth, but to deprive the rich of the monopoly of a land which they keep almost

empty, and to re-people the country. The power of the Lords was restricted, they were reduced to the state of supernumeraries, like so many of the coronation dignitaries who remain but as memories of a romantic past: one might almost say that a single-chamber government was established. Payment of members, abolition of the plural vote, which favours the wealthy, abolition of the privileges of the Anglican Church in Wales, Home Rule for Ireland, and then extension of the same principle to other parts of the kingdom (there was even a talk of going back to the Heptarchy), social legislation, old age pensions, compulsory insurance, reduction of the number of public houses, purchase and division of the land by the State in order to encourage small proprietors—such are the main items of the programme the discussion of which absorbed the attention of the country, and which the governments, idealist and pacifist in their tendency, of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith had begun to put into practice.

The Conservatives had no doubt in 1910 talked of the German danger, but only to defend against the Radicals the old English tradition of naval supremacy. It was but a party argument, for they were no more inclined than their political opponents to risk unpopularity by proposing conscription. When, in 1912, Lord Roberts delivered, at Manchester, the first of his great speeches in favour of universal military service, Unionists and Liberals alike condemned his campaign as futile and dangerous. On the whole, since all

the activity of the Government was concentrated on home affairs, it was towards the discussion of these affairs and the defence of their own favourite remedies—protection, the referendum, the reform, and not the degradation, of the Upper House—that the Opposition directed all its efforts. On both sides alike there was a tacit agreement that with the Boer War three centuries of territorial expansion had come to an end, that the Empire was finished, and that England had nothing more to do than to administer and improve her estate, to eliminate from it, as far as possible, injustice and suffering, and to organise society for the greater welfare of future generations.

At the same time, coming from the Continent, and strengthened amongst the Wesleyans and Methodists by religious conviction and zeal, was spreading, together with the dream of a new social organisation, the idea of international brotherhood and of everlasting peace between the nations. No doubt there were pessimists who saw and denounced Germany as a jealous and threatening rival. For all that, the "Liberal," democratic, and therefore dominant idea was that two great Christian and industrial nations, that stood before the world for the same civilisation, could not fail to come to an understanding, and that their working masses, in spite of all political differences, were sure to make common cause in defence of their class interests. It was sufficient, in order to dispel all risk of quarrel, to send conducted tours of English trade unionists for trips on the banks of the

Rhine or the Spree: in the genial warmth of after-dinner speeches the ancient scales of distrust and prejudice would fall from every eye, and the men of both countries would recognise each other as brothers. Between two rival manufacturing countries, all that was necessary was to come to an agreement by mutual concessions and division of markets. In spite of the curious obstinacy of Germany in developing her navy, illusions such as these guided the responsible rulers of the country. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government tried at first to win the favour of the German Sphinx by suspending building in the Government dockyards for a year; and down to 1912 the same Cabinet, and afterwards that of Mr. Asquith, repeatedly made proposals for international arbitration and disarmament. Even in 1913, with regard to Turkish affairs (Treaty of London and reoccupation of Adrianople), with regard to the Bagdad railway, with regard to the possible purchase of Portuguese colonies by the Germans, Sir Edward Grey showed his good-will.

In fact, the further the reign of Edward VII was left behind, the more did the policy of this minister reduce itself to making concessions intended to secure peace. The previous year, at a hint from the Kaiser, Lord Haldane, a scholar and philosopher, who only saw in Germany the Heidelberg of his youth, and spoke of it as his "spiritual home," had been to Berlin. We know now what proposals were there made to him: Mr. Asquith, since the development of events, has told us with the expression of outraged honesty.

It seems that Germany offered to *slacken* the pace of her naval development, on condition that she was given a free hand on the Continent. On the worthy gentlemen this proposal, with its scarcely veiled cynicism, this unexpected manifestation of primitive nature, seems to have produced an indelible impression.[1] Under the mask of civilisation which had until then deceived them, they suddenly perceived the pirate preparing his *coup*. They kept this revelation to themselves, and again set about, with what anxiety and presentiments may be imagined, their work of domestic reform.

For ten years past sudden demonstrations had revealed the greed and impatience of Germany. In the first place, the rapid growth of a navy the real intention of which—the challenge to England for her place in the world—soon ceased to be concealed. In 1905 came the first rattling of the sword: Algeciras, which was an ultimatum, of which England good-naturedly tried to veil the disquieting effects, by cutting down her naval programme and afterwards reducing her regular army (1906); but to this Germany replied just as she had done to the French law, which reduced military service to two years, by increasing her armaments. Then came other scares: the Bosnian affair, the humiliation of which Russia swallowed in silence; the Kaiser's speech on "the shining armour"; the demonstration at Agadir following close upon the ironical refusal to entertain proposals of disarmament and "naval holidays"; and then, in 1912, the fiasco of Lord Haldane's mission to Berlin. Finally, in the

[1] Speech by Mr. Asquith at Cardiff, October 2, 1914.

same year, and still more in 1913, the enormous increase of the German army by means of special war taxes that raised a thousand million francs. No doubt the Radical Government saw the coming menace; not only did it see it, but it faced it, during the Agadir crisis, when, since honour required it, both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith spoke so plainly. But to England herself they did not speak with the same resolution. Not a word to the country of military requirements. No doubt everything was done to keep the navy ahead of its rival; in this direction there were no difficulties: naval supremacy is a tradition of the British people, which respects tradition so strongly; to maintain it the Englishman is accustomed to make sacrifices. The reorganisation by Lord Haldane of the old militia, which was now known as the Reserve, and the creation of the Territorial Army, had, of course, taken place. These measures were applauded, for they dealt but with volunteer and almost independent bodies, simple rifle clubs, training each year for a few weeks only. There was little new about them except the names. But universal military service would have been a real innovation of foreign origin, a "*continental*" invention, like the motor-car, the submarine and the aeroplane, which our English friends were slow to take up, like the Channel Tunnel, the idea of which has been rejected by the succeeding Cabinets of both parties. Not only did the Liberal Government, aware as it was of German hankerings, do nothing to prepare the country for the great measure which was necessary, it even opposed it. Mr. Asquith met

the proposals of the "League for Conscription" with refusal; the party journals overwhelmed the apostles of the new idea with sarcasm; worst of all, these papers started a set campaign to prove that Germany was pacifist, whilst they denounced the "war panickers" and declared that, if the worst came to the worst, the navy was sufficient to meet any foreign attack.

Prophets, however, had risen to warn the people both of the growing danger and of the only efficient defence against it. At their head was Lord Roberts, that fine old soldier, with the strong and refined face, who for seven years devoted himself to this task, at the age of seventy-six facing crowds, transforming himself into a political agitator, an organiser of meetings, a great orator, and with clear foresight summing all up in the epigram: "Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck." Behind him came others, men of every origin and of every party: a great poet like Kipling, mystics and militant Socialists like Stead and Blatchford, journalists and professors like Frederic and Austin Harrison, Maxse, Cramb, Sarolea, who knew their Germany and for years past had seen in the clearest light her intentions and manœuvres. Mr. Maxse, the editor of the *National Review*, could talk of nothing else, to such an extent that his "one idea" became an object of mockery (he has recently collected his articles under the ironical title of *Germany on the Brain*). In vain did all these point to the growth of German will and

power, both alike directed to one essential and final aim: the dispossession of England. In vain, quoting the Berlin professors, did they prove the hatred existing in Germany, and demonstrate its deeper and inevitable causes: the irrepressible tendency of a nation growing at an immoderate rate and mistaking its appetite for a mission, to rise above all others and take up constantly more of the planet's surface;—a tendency thwarted by the presence on every continent of another nation which, whilst refusing to take the trouble to arm and scorning the restraints and slavery of militarism, claims—such is the German argument—by virtue of its superior right, of its privileges as an old nation, a nation of "gentlemen," that is to say, an aged and already decadent nation—to retain indefinitely the command of the sea, every colony, every market, every cable, every port of call, every naval base, the whole, in fact, of its matchless empire won, not by the superior virtue of a methodic plan, of an organising and conquering theory, but by an incoherent series of chances, adventures, stratagems, and piratical raids. In vain did they demonstrate that the navy was no longer a sufficient defence against such threatening greed, backed up by so strong a will and such formidable means, for the enemy would strive at once to become master of the Continent, and once in possession of the "counter-scarp of Flanders" and of all the resources of France, would soon have a fleet superior to any which England could build, and then launch a victorious attack simultaneously from Calais, Cherbourg,

Antwerp, Rotterdam and Cuxhaven. In vain did they point, in conclusion, to the sole means of defence—power to stop the first step of Germany on the road to Flanders and France—sufficient power to make her understand that she could be opposed on the Continent; in a word, the creation of an army on the continental scale. By adopting conscription, they said, war would be avoided.

Such was, indeed, the logical conclusion, but in England logic is devoid of prestige. Moreover, in all countries, to stir up men to great sacrifices, argument avails but little; the stimulus of sentiment and of passion is required, or else the experience of pressing necessity and even of misfortune. Now, the German peril created no alarm; a specialist here and there might calculate it just as astronomers by their equations may predict a collision between planets. The great public had not that immediate sight of it which is expressed by the English verb to *realise*, and which alone could rouse the English mind, a mind impervious to all but facts of concrete experience, to the necessity of action. Sentiment and passion were concentrating more and more on the affairs of Ireland. About July 20th, 1914, all London was, indeed, talking of war, it was even talking of nothing else; but it was of war in Ulster, an inevitable war, so it seemed, growing out of historic prejudices and grudges, bringing into collision two parties each of which had a distorted vision of the other, but a vision highly

coloured, charged with sentiment, and hence full of life and power to excite fanaticism. By the side of these visions of civil war, what was this possibility of a German war? An abstract idea, all the more superficial and foreign to the organised and real self of the nation because it was new: England until then had never known Germany as an enemy, the Englishman never having seen in the German anything but the too diligent clerk, of quiet and respectable habits, who was a member of his football club, or the inevitable waiter with his well-oiled hair, his stiff manners, and his black coat verging on green, who attended on him at his restaurant. Scorned by the Government, slighted by the Opposition, the ideas of Lord Roberts and his League had no weight in the political life of the country. "Fads," no doubt, like those which start vegetarian leagues, anti-vaccination societies and the like, which are incessantly springing up in England—fads which are only to be met with the smile of tolerance.

And not only did the forces of sentiment fail to move in the direction of the great measure of defence; the very mention of conscription roused a strongly hostile sentiment. The old distrust which the Commons of England had of the military forces of the king were awakened; misty but deeply rooted memories of centuries of strife between nation and monarch, of the Revolution, of Cromwell, perhaps of Magna Charta itself. To this day the permission of the chief of the merchant guilds, of the Lord Mayor of the city,

is required before armed troops may cross the threshold of the ancient township. To this day the consent of Parliament is necessary to legalise the proceedings of military tribunals, and must be renewed every year. And even when thus authorised, they are held to be nothing more than the domestic discipline of a private society or "club," as the writer was once told by a well-known English barrister in connection with the Dreyfus affair, the soldier always remaining a citizen, subject to the jurisdiction, for every crime and misdemeanour, of a jury and a civil judge; and even to-day no soldier, whatever may be the orders of his officers, is exempted from this jurisdiction. Add to all this the ancient contempt in which the military were held (it was expressed not so very long ago by this inscription on the doors of certain taverns: "Soldiers not admitted"), the old middle-class, commercial, puritan, nonconformist prejudice against the red-coats, against troops which for centuries were mostly recruited in drinking bars from the ranks of ne'er do wells and loafers.[1]

Above all, the proud idea prevailed that the Englishman alone is a free man, that he is so not by some philosophic fiction, not by the deceptive appearance of a theoretic formula inscribed one fine day on all public buildings, but really and actually, as a positive result of a struggle that has lasted now nearly a thousand years, because,

[1] In a pamphlet of the recruiting propaganda this sentence appeared: "You must recognise, in the first place, that it is not a sin to be a soldier."

through all these centuries, he has won and thoroughly assimilated his liberties, of which the first, the most fundamental, the right to dispose of his own person and of his time, is formulated in the old law of *Habeas Corpus*. It was with reference to the opposition between this essential liberty and conscription that a member of the Upper House, Lord Dysart, publicly asked the other day in the *Daily Chronicle*: "Can a slave be a free man?" Every act of an Englishman who has not, as a criminal, forfeited his rights as a citizen must be voluntary; of his own free will only should he surrender his person and his time. To tamper with this principle, with this constitutional tradition of the "kingdom," with this privilege of Englishmen, would be an offence not only against the "spirit of the Constitution," but against English self-respect itself. As to any immediate danger, as to the necessity of taking part in a continental war: little does the great public care about the "counter-scarp of Flanders." Guarded by the navy, the old moats of the Channel and the North Sea have never been crossed, and the wisdom of England is to trust only in precedents. But to suppose the impossible, should the country ever be really threatened—well then, all Englishmen would rise to throw the invader back into the sea: at the very least three million volunteers. Now, an Englishman has always equalled several foreigners, and one volunteer, by reason of his superior virtue, is worth several slave conscripts on the battlefield. A lawyer and statesman, Sir John Simon, accustomed to weigh his

words, has been able to measure this superiority exactly: it is in the ratio of three to one; and a specialist, a soldier, a former Secretary for War, Colonel Seely, taking both qualities, that of Englishman and that of volunteer into account, has defined it as ten to one. In the first case—and these figures have been seriously given and published [1]—nine million Germans, and in the second case thirty million, would be required to fight on a footing of equality three million Englishmen, raised on the spur of the moment to defend their country. Such convictions gave encouragement to another idea, very powerful in a Puritan country in which, moral values taking precedence of all others, both individual and national pride has long maintained itself on an assurance of superior virtue: the idea that whilst compulsion is necessary to raise the armies of other lands, it would be magnificent that the spontaneous impulse of its men should be sufficient to defend England.

To these illusions and prejudices which prevented England from immediately adapting herself to meet the danger, another and very different cause of delay was added from without: the secret work of the enemy, carried on for three years to blind the nation to the danger. Mr. Wickham Steed has described the attempt [2]: so great was its success, that our neighbours were in 1914 less prepared than in 1911 to face Germany

[1] Speech by Colonel Seely at Heanor, April 26, 1913, and by Sir John Simon at Ashton-under-Lyne, November 21, 1914.

[2] See the *Revue de Paris* for June 1, 1915.

on the Continent. At the height of the Agadir crisis they had not hesitated, and the firm bearing, the clear words of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George had amazed the aggressor, now ready to spring. It will be remembered to what bargaining Germany was then reduced, what was seen of her seething anger and disappointed greed. But her will to dominate persisted: the only thing was to begin again, with fresh precautions, and with sufficient time to increase the forces which had not frightened France, and to get rid of England's opposition, which had just been experienced in so humiliating a fashion. With this end in view two series of parallel operations, conducted, however, in opposite directions, were started: the military laws of 1912 and 1913, and the demonstrations of friendship combined with the pacifist propaganda in England, of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein and Prince Lichnowsky. For the real object of their missions was to lull British apprehensions, and, above all, to work upon and win over the great Radical party, which, having naturally a horror of war, and still more of the only preventive remedy against war, conscription, already showed reluctance to believe in the danger. The work of the German emissaries is well known, their flatteries, their secret, prolonged and successful influence over the leading journals of the party in power: the *Daily News*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Daily Chronicle*, and through these over the great nonconformist public of the working and lower middle-classes whose opinion rules the country and decides elections.

Of course English newspapers are not to be bought, but journalists can be circumvented: Herr von Kuhlmann can have them invited to the embassy; Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who was specially selected for his tactful and ingratiating qualities, Prince Lichnowsky, who really seems never to have been acquainted with the secret aim of German policy, and whose sincerity was used as a tool by his Government, can talk to them their favourite language: two great manufacturing nations should go hand in hand; Germany wants nothing but peace; the only thing is to arrange an *entente* with her, especially not to arrange an *entente* against her, and, above all, not to threaten her with armaments such as those recommended by Lord Roberts; the intervention of England in the recent crisis in Morocco was an insolent and dangerous challenge to the great German democracy. With such arguments Radical sentiments already harmonised. It is an old tradition of the party that all increase of the army and all alliance with the foreigner are dangerous, provocative and compromising; that England ought to isolate herself and seek safety in peace and the resources of her own Empire. The *Daily News* responded to German suggestions with the enthusiasm of a ready-made conviction which requires nothing but the signal for action and the indication of the point of attack. Against the *Entente* with France the great Radical journal paradoxically carried on a campaign, with the same zeal and for the same reason as certain French socialist papers some time ago attacked the *Entente* with

England: because such an understanding was distasteful to Germany and because the only way to secure peace was *not* to run counter to German policy. Like these papers again, but more readily, since only foreign interests were in question, at every turn of the Morocco crisis the same *Daily News*, following the lead of an impassioned polemist, Mr. E. D. Morel, regularly attacked all the French contentions, and carried prejudice to such a point that, whilst professing to give its readers a detailed account of this affair, it made no reference to the Franco-German agreement of 1909. This campaign was opposed by the Government. They would have given much, had offered much—too much, no doubt—to obtain a *rapprochement* with Germany, but to sacrifice for it the friendship with France was a price which they were not prepared to pay. For this resistance the pacifist press declared Sir Edward Grey mainly responsible, and the cry desired by the Germans, suggested, no doubt, by them, was raised: "Grey must go." Sir Edward Grey remained.

To understand what this campaign was and the measure of success which it attained, it must not be forgotten that it was inspired by a series of dreams, ideas and sentiments of a religious order, by a purely idealistic and Christian faith in a possible and coming reign over mankind of peace, justice and love. It is not without significance that the *Daily News* belongs to Quakers, by whom the command, "Thou shalt not kill," is taken in its absolute sense, and who therefore regard war as

a state of sin. It is in the most strictly religious section of the community, amongst Methodists, Baptists and Low Church people, that, throughout the nineteenth century, Liberal principles have found their chief support; and if pacifist proposals —reduction of armaments, compulsory arbitration, limitation of colonial expansion, all that the Tories called "Little Englandism"—had also become part of the Liberal programme, the reason is that, since the evangelical revival at the beginning of the last century, the free Churches had vigorously spread the dream of peace and goodwill between the nations. Of course the Christian idea that pride and war are of Satan, whilst humility, meekness of heart, and justice are of God, is often naturally opposed, and sometimes also supported by instinct and self-interest; but, in spite of all, as in that other land of mystics, Russia, it is powerful and capable of influencing national policy. This was plainly seen under the government of Mr. Gladstone, whose idealism sprang from a fervent religious faith. If he had not been the great Christian gentleman he was, would he have dared to make peace with the Boers after the English defeat at Majuba? Little he cared about prestige. He was inspired by a principle which is the exact reverse of that which rules in Germany; *meekness of heart* and not *imponiren*—desire for peace and justice and not will to power and conquest. An idea of the same order was uttered by another idealist, of the same Anglo-Saxon and Puritan culture, President Wilson, when he said, at the time of his first difficulties with Germany in the course of the present war:

"It is possible to be too proud to fight." The pride referred to here is the determination not to betray an ideal: that ideal common alike to rationalist and Christian, at once mystical and democratic, which inspires the great transatlantic republic to such an extent that, to understand the spiritual conditions of nonconformist, industrial and radical England, the England of the north and the north-west, on the eve of the war, we have only to observe how the working-class population of the United States reacts to the present events —that population which is so conscientious but of the purely board-school outlook, and which reduces problems, the origin and real meaning of which it cannot understand, to mere matters of sentiment. And after all, in order to predict what would be the resistance of one section of opinion, it was enough to recall to mind how stubborn had been the opposition to the Boer War of an honourable minority amongst our neighbours.

In 1914 war was legitimate on the part of England, since it was resolved upon by Germany against the friends of England, and finally, evidently, through these friends, against England herself. But public opinion, especially that of the party in power, of the working men and of the commercial middle class, had not been prepared. Or, rather, it had been prepared, but by Germany through her secret or unconscious agents, in a direction contrary to the honour and interests of England. Hence, when the ambition and the plot were suddenly unveiled, when the blow was struck

in all its startling enormity, at the moment when rapid decision was so important, Sir Edward Grey's perplexity, evasions and delays. No doubt Mr. Asquith's cabinet clearly saw that sooner or later England was bound to come into the war, when the duty and vital necessity of intervention finally became apparent and imperative to every one. But on the historical dates when everything was still in the balance, the Government—a party Government based on public opinion—knew that an important section of the country, in fact the majority of its own party, was unfavourable to intervention. Already the *Manchester Guardian* had begun to side for Austria against Servia, and the *Daily News* was denouncing as "dangerous" Sir Edward Grey, the minister whom this same journal had formally declared "impossible," just as on the eve of Algeciras there had been French papers to demand the impeachment of M. Delcassé. This is indeed what we should remember. In 1905, in the face of unforeseen danger and at the dictation of Germany, we at once sacrificed our minister and submitted to the conference. In 1914, after three years of German intrigues against the minister who remained faithful, in spite of all temptations, to the *Entente*, at the sudden and unforeseen crisis English opinion appeared to waver, and the complete and necessary decision was delayed for a week. A quite unavoidable delay, for in a self-governing country, whose liberty is real, positive and consecrated by long-aged customs, a Cabinet has neither the right nor the power to decide on war, if the will of the nation is not

behind the Government, and both Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey would not have been long in learning this. A fatal delay, almost infinite in its consequences, for, by a singular irony of fate, the act which seemed likely to throw England into the conflict, and which down to the violation of Belgian neutrality the radical pacifists made every effort to prevent, was the only one which could have prevented the conflict. And to such an extent is this true that now the most artless and shameless of all German grievances against Great Britain is that, by her incessant attempts for ten years to avoid war, she had induced Germany to think that she was afraid of it, that she would therefore keep out of it at all costs, and so had incited her to war. At the very beginning, and several times in the course of the crisis, first by M. Sazonoff's plain warning, then by the urgent appeals of M. Paléologue, M. Poincaré and M. Paul Cambon to the English ambassadors and to Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith's cabinet was informed that there was one chance, and one chance only, of avoiding the catastrophe, into which, moreover, England would inevitably be dragged, and that was that England should instantly and resolutely take her stand by the side of France and Russia.

To this solemn and repeated warning, the perspicacity of which has been proved by all the subsequent events (and in the first place by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's panic when Sir Edward Goschen at last announced the ultimatum to him), is it necessary to recall what was during

that memorable week England's sybilline answer? On the 24th nothing but this: She agrees that it will be difficult for her to remain neutral if war becomes general. On the 25th, when M. Sazonoff adds that rivers of blood will flow if London stands out, the repugnance to decisive action, the anxiety to exhibit an illusory and nebulous caution, remain the same: it is declared that in order that the English effort at mediation at Vienna and Berlin may be efficient it is necessary that England should present herself not as an ally of the enemy, but as a friend, a friend who may be converted into an enemy if her counsels of moderation are disregarded.[1] On the 27th, after receiving the new, urgent and significant message from Russia that Vienna and Berlin are counting, whatever happens, upon the neutrality of England, Downing Street envelops itself in a still thicker fog, a fog in which every object seems to lose or, even, blur its outline: it is asserted that any such idea on the part of the Austro-German group "should be dispelled by the orders given to the First Fleet which is concentrated at Portland not to disperse for manœuvre leave."[2] But care is taken to add, in speaking to Russia, that this fact promises nothing more than diplomatic support, and, in speaking to Austria, that there is no threat concealed beneath this fact. On the 29th the refusal to be bound is more clearly stated: M. Cambon and his Government must not count on the Agadir precedent, for the dispute

[1] Blue Book, No. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, No. 47.

this time does not arise out of any Franco-English agreement; England has not decided her line of action, she is free to act or not. But the same day Sir Edward warns Prince Lichnowsky that if Germany, and then France, should descend into the maelstrom it would be a mistake to count on the inaction of England. And whilst remaining hidden behind these mists, he sees all the time clear and far, for, remembering the solemn warning which he has received from Russia and France, he takes care to guard himself formally against the mean accusation which Germany will one day cast against him, of having incited her to war, by not at once addressing her in threatening terms: "I replied" (to the German Ambassador) ". . . . that I did not wish to be open to any reproach from him that the friendly tone of our conversation had misled him or his Government into supposing that we should not take action, and to the reproach that, if they had not been so misled, the course of things might have been different."[1] And nevertheless, on the 31st again, M. Poincaré having expressed the opinion that there will be no war if England declares herself the ally of France, he replies, through Sir Francis Bertie, that "nobody here feels that in this dispute, so far as it has yet gone, British treaties and rights are involved," and that "we cannot undertake a definite pledge to intervene in a war."[2] The hesitation is really only apparent, and under all the external forms of this diplomacy a very definite idea is to be found, and

[1] Blue Book, No. 89.
[2] *Ibid.*, No. 116, replying to No. 99.

that is a refusal to make a binding engagement to intervene; for, in this last week in July, Mr. Asquith's cabinet has not yet the right to do so, and an act so contrary to a constitution, the essential articles of which are not written, would run the risk of stirring up a formidable opposition—a refusal also to bind oneself *not* to intervene, for Mr. Asquith's cabinet well knows the truth of M. Sazonoff's words, and that if in a Franco-German war English intervention may take place too late, it is none the less certain to take place.

Certain it is, because England cannot, without giving herself up, allow Germany to grow towards the west and to approach the sea. And still more imperatively so because, in spite of the letters which Sir Edward Grey and M. Paul Cambon exchanged on the far-seeing initiative of the Foreign Office in 1912, pointing out that no written or spoken agreement binds the two countries, at the moment when the English minister asserts England's diplomatic independence, England discovers herself bound to France by all kinds of invisible but living bonds. Such is the unexpected result of her political method of *laisser-faire*—the opposite of Germany's—of her repugnance to concerting and co-ordinating means systematically to predetermined ends. After having allowed herself, little by little, and without making any preparations, to be forced into a war the risk of which had long been evident, England discovers, all at once, that without having signed anything, in spite of refusing to sign anything, by the silent pressure of circumstances she is inevitably driven

into the formal alliance which her ministers had tried to avoid. "England had drifted into the war, and England had drifted into the alliance." To drift, that is to allow oneself to be led passively by the imperceptible and continuous current of events—or, in politics, to obey the over-cautious maxim which Mr. Asquith has given as his principle of government: "Wait and see." [1] At the critical moment, whilst the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is demonstrating that there is no diplomatic document setting up an alliance, the alliance is seen to be morally imperative as a result of the past. Of course, England is bound to nothing; the conversations between the High Commands of the two countries were only conversations with a view to an agreement which remained a mere possibility, but they have introduced the British into the secret of our defences, and this intimacy cannot have failed to rouse in France a hope of British support in case of German aggression. More imperative still, and pointed out as being so at the very beginning of the crisis by the great Conservative newspapers, is the arrangement by which our Navy left the Channel and Atlantic coasts of France to the protection of the British Navy in order to concentrate in the Mediterranean, where it assumes the protection of British interests. And such weight has this last fact that on the 2nd of August, before the Belgian question has been raised, Sir Edward Grey

[1] On this policy and its consequences consult the important book of Mr. F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*. Cf. Austin Harrison, *England and Germany*, 1907, and *The Kaiser's War*.

gives to M. Cambon the assurance that, to the extent of her power, England will guarantee these coasts against every attack, though this does not prevent him from adding—such is his anxiety, even at such a moment, to avoid any appearance of warlike action—that this assurance must not be understood to involve English intervention. But, of all the reasons which impel England at the critical moment to take her place by the side of France, the most active is that which is at the same time the most difficult to define and the most honourable: it is the idea of the *entente*, the recollection of so many words and tokens of friendship which seem to have given birth to a tacit promise; it is the feeling that an intimate union of ten years' standing is as strong as a written contract to bind two nations to each other in so serious a crisis, and that when the one is in danger, the other cannot remain unconcerned without disgrace. On August 2, when Germany was openly marching on France, every Englishman in whom the international religion of humanity, strengthened by pacifist puritanism, has not destroyed the sense of national honour, feels small at the thought that England is not already at the side of France. His impression is that of a duty shirked, of an act of disloyalty, almost of treachery, which the interested person is attempting to excuse, basing himself on the letter of the law. A few days after, heartfelt letters from English friends told me, what every one repeated later when I crossed the Channel: "We should not have been able to look a Frenchman in the face if we had not taken up

arms; you would really have had the right to call us perfidious Albion!" A noble poem has said what was the feeling of relief when, on August 4, England took the step which bound her to us.

"Most human France! . . .
. . . let this
Be of that day remembered with what pride
Our ancient island thrilled to the oceans wide,
And our hearts leapt to know that England then,
Equal in faith of free and loyal men,
Stepped to her side![1]

Every one knows what decided everything, and, in a single day, secured the unanimity of the nation. Had the British Government reckoned on the violation of Belgian neutrality? At all events it had warned Germany of the immediate and necessary consequences of this step. No doubt, rather than any profound calculations of political psychology, Sir Edward Grey obeyed the command of the plighted word. But, even had he foreseen all that was to follow, we may believe that he would have acted precisely as he did. From the military point of view, perhaps it is to be regretted that General French's army did not arrive on the field forty-eight hours earlier; and yet, now that we know the enormous disproportion of the confronted forces, it is not certain that the issue would have been very different. But what a moral advantage was obtained by a delay which, through the act of Germany, was only of a few days! It proves to all neutrals and to history the innocence and

[1] *France*, by Laurence Binyon, in *The Times* of July 14, 1915.

the patience of a nation which waited to make up her mind to war till Germany, tearing up a common pact, forced her by the very terms of that pact to draw the sword. And better still, the event which ends the delay also ends at a single blow all possible internal opposition to the war—to the war which England would never have entered on out of self-interest (Mr. Oliver points out that the old-fashioned phrase, "British interests," had for many years been banished from the language of politics as not sufficiently idealistic)—but to the war which, if made now, before a greater and stronger Germany attacks an isolated England, can alone secure the future: *Delenda est Carthago* was Treitschke's constant cry; and everything points to this as the ultimate purpose of Germany. In the very number which gave the news, the papers which for years, and even the very day before, had been most hostile to the idea of war, those very newspapers which seemed to have made German interests and arguments their own, the *Daily News* at their head, proclaim the end of all polemics and an imperative national duty. England has pledged her word; the promise has come due: argument is over. From this moment, in all earnestness, the strict religious conscience, which fought so stoutly against the impulses and demands of mere patriotism, leads in the same direction. For two reasons the Germans counted on the inaction of a country which they had long looked upon as their future prey. By their methodical propaganda in industrial and nonconformist circles, they thought they had won over

the puritan conscience to their schemes; and, in the next place, it had never entered into their heads that a people who had refused to arm themselves for war, might nevertheless determine to undertake it for the sake of a duty. Passively this people was to witness the invasion of Flanders, the defeat of France and Russia, the enslavement of the little neutral states; after which, when its own turn came, it would be too late to resist. Now, by an irony of fate and to the amazement of the Germans, it was precisely the English conscience which threw England, as yet ignorant of the hatred and greed with which she had been watched, into the struggle which it was her only fault not to have prepared for; it was this conscience which, speaking to millions of young men, was about to call up an army of volunteers on the continental scale, to weld the whole country into an ever-increasing will—the will to resist and to conquer—to improvise the impossible, and, correcting the accumulated errors of the past ever and again, to multiply tenfold for the Allies the value of England's help. And thus it was this conscience which was to save England.

II

England was innocent of the war, and she went to war like an innocent. She had never fought Germany; she had no idea of the German methods of warfare. For her, war was a noble, dangerous and exciting game, in which that nation was bound

to win which had the best men, not the most intellectual, the most educated, nor even, perhaps, the best armed; but the finest, the healthiest, the hardiest, the most capable, beneath all their humour and good humour, of steadfast will, faithfulness to duty, and stubbornness in effort. Such men as these—Kipling's men—English education, together with all the suggestions of English environment, had never ceased to produce, in all the categories of society; the English looked upon them as the special human product of England; they constituted her peculiar virtue which had never failed her in her hour of need. In these men still lived, more or less clearly, the ancient idea of chivalry —of Christian and Western origin—which the national literature of the nineteenth century had revived, which Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley, Tennyson taught or sang, whilst adapting it to the requirements of a modern and industrial age—the lofty French and English idea which the Germans have ridiculed. Was it not Mommsen who threw this sarcasm at the Kelts that they were "a people whose conception of a superior type had not gone beyond the knight"? The knight, in modern England, is called by a name of great moral meaning and prestige—*the gentleman;* and he has remained essentially Christian. In his modern form he is the recognised model, the ideal type of which the nation, as a nation, wishes to practise the virtues—strength combined with gentleness, modesty in word and deed, silent subjection of selfish and conquering instinct to the desire for justice and truth. By the side of France, where

a similar ideal is still alive—an ideal which springs from the same source, but which lacks the nuances of protestantism and is tinged with rationalism—in presence of an aggressive Germany which is not yet known to have given herself up to the worship of force and instinct, to the diabolical Nietzschean creed and to the memories of Teutonic paganism, England rises as the Christian and gentleman nation, conceiving war but in the manner of gentlemen and Christians.[1] She is also a nation of sportsmen, in the almost ethical sense which this word has assumed during the last fifteen or twenty years, a morality of new and special character having sprung from the practice of sports, that daily and almost excessive activity of the whole people. A nation of sportsmen anxious to play the game—that is, to play it scrupulously, without excitement or hatred, without ever allowing the desire to win to overcome respect for the rules; respecting also their opponent, whom they believe to be worthy of them, and whose hand, whether they win or lose, they

[1] In the course of this war, in all the churches, prayers are offered for the enemy. This is the prayer of the Established Church; I heard it in May 1915 in London and in a little country church. (The verses are separated by the response of the congregation, "Hear us, we beseech thee.") "That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, and to help us to forgive them; to remove their misunderstanding, and to allay their bitterness; to give them repentance for their misdoings, and a readiness to make amends; to shew thy pity upon those of them who suffer—in battle, or through bereavement, poverty, or other miseries of war; to reward with thy mercy such of them as shew mercy to their enemies; be not overcome of evil: but overcome evil with good. When a man's ways please the Lord: He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

wish, after the struggle, to grasp honourably. In spite of the fever of the Boer War—and one remembers how the English themselves laughed, later on, at their *Maffickin'* night—it was this conception of war and peace which allowed a statue of President Kruger to be set up at Pretoria two years after the submission of the Boers. And the same idea showed itself when a new English Dreadnought received the name of *Botha*, whilst the rebellion was miscarrying which the Germans had fomented, and on the success of which they counted, as if the Transvaal had been a Prussian Poland or an Alsace-Lorraine.

Such were the illusions and feelings with which England entered upon the struggle. An English volunteer said to me, " We expected a rather rough game of football "—a curious word for us, but quite natural on the other side of the Channel, where men are inclined to take life as a game—a game sometimes dangerous and difficult, and all the more exciting—because all expressions of anxiety and emotion, indeed, anxiety and emotion themselves, are forbidden by English ethics and etiquette; and in the face of hard reverses, or obvious peril, good form exacts the most commonplace words, with the impassive and smiling attitude of superiority to fate—and we all know what power have words and gestures to create a spiritual state. To-day England no longer believes that a war with Germany is a game of football; she has at last learnt the full meaning of the word *enemy*, and that this enemy is not a mere opponent, but that he hates, and earnestly

wishes to destroy, without being particular as to the means. She is astonished at her former simplicity, which was, like so many other deficiencies, a failure in adaptation, proving once more how slow this old country is in changing her habits and tendencies of life and thought to respond to the changes of the outer world. Against the nation which publicly tore up a treaty, and then, in cold blood, burned and slaughtered in order to paralyse innocent Belgium by terror, and get through quicker, they began by fighting with the manners of the battle of Fontenoy. They long avoided certain proceedings which would probably have been decisive if used at once: for instance, from sheer conscience and humanitarian generosity, they delayed for several months declaring contraband of war foreign imports which were indispensable to Germany, allowing her to accumulate fresh stocks of wheat and cotton, which threaten to prolong the war indefinitely. Thousands of Germans, settled in the United Kingdom, were allowed to live and go about in peace, without even being watched—some of whom were notoriously related to leaders of the enemy. The commander of the *Emden*, whose acts of piracy were undeniable, had his sword returned to him with compliments. The officers of the *Blucher*, who died in captivity at Edinburgh, were given a funeral with almost national honours, the whole garrison turning out under arms. At Oxford they went further: in the hall of New College, memorial tablets were set up in honour of former German scholars of the Cecil Rhodes Foun-

dation who died fighting England, and whose names will endure in the old University beside those of England's heroes; the numbers of their Prussian or Bavarian regiments were not forgotten. For the captive enemy officers a country house was provided, the fitting up of which called for a special vote of £20,000: Donnington Hall, where these gentlemen, dressed afresh in flannels, tweeds, or cheviots, led the "genteel" and leisurely English country life: tennis, flirtations with charming visitors, tea served on velvet lawns, though only one servant was allowed to every three officers. In short, England seemed to remember the romantic and legendary times of chivalry, the luxurious captivity of our King Jean le Bon, and the tournaments to which he was treated at Windsor by his victor—a victor, by the way, who exacted a ransom which came near ruining France. The Germans enjoyed it all and sneered; the Allies sometimes wondered. A good many English people began to wonder too, questions were asked in Parliament.

Meanwhile, astounding news was arriving, first from Belgium, then from France: sacking of towns, rape, systematic slaughter. The papers gave startling details. But to a public brought up in the worship of common sense and law, to readers accustomed to order, moderation, and all the ancestral wisdom of England, to moral, orderly Englishmen, who believe only in what they have seen, the monstrous—which they have never seen—was difficult to reconcile with their notions of the real. In this old and deeply civilised country,

such an inversion of civilisation was not to be conceived. Far from the heavy clay soil and solid realities of England, under the influences of the Continent and the tumults of war, the newspaper correspondents were surely exaggerating. After all, the Germans were known, there were only too many of them in England. That these quiet drinkers of *lager-bier*, these stolid clerks and tradesmen devoid of humour, and only too attentive to their book-keeping, should between Monday and Tuesday, within one hundred and fifty miles of London, behave like Kipling's Dacoits, seemed unbelievable: probably, no doubt, some yarn from the front, spun round some fortuitous incident in those picturesque "foreign parts," where imagination is so quickly stirred. Those doubts were not expressed, but they weighed heavily and did not help to rouse the mind of the nation. It was not until the first letters from English officers were published in the papers, undeniable documents, emanating from genuine "gentlemen," not the sport of their impressions, and who "knew what evidence was,"—it was not until the stories of the first wounded returning to England were heard, and then, after this preparation, the complete reports of the Belgian Commission of Enquiry were published, one by one, that the incredible truth began to be accepted by every one; and even then it was impossible that the effect should be instantaneous, the mind of the masses in England being of such a nature that it can only be excited to belief and emotion by immediate and concrete sensations. To the work-

ing people in the Midlands and the West, Belgium and France are very distant countries, and the war hardly differed in their eyes from all those which England has always carried on so successfully against so many foreign nations. Little by little, however, under the pressure of a reality soon too evident and too near at hand, a vivid realisation of German crime sank into the depths of the country. It raised a horror which may be regarded to-day as the principal and invincible element of the English will to conquer. It was, in fact, an abstract duty which had brought this will into being. Abomination for the deeds of Germany quickly rallied all the profound and spontaneous energies of the national soul. At the moment when Germany, maddened by her pantheistic worship of Force and Will, drunk with blood and victory, appeared to herself as God, in England, where everything is judged from the ethical point of view, Germany appeared as the Devil.[1]

In the upper sections of the great public, this latter idea had arisen more quickly. The reason was that, in order to stimulate enlistment, it had been necessary to demonstrate that it was a duty, and so to prove the responsibility of the enemy. Translations, at popular prices, of Bernhardi, Treitschke, Nietzsche, Von der Goltz, of the manual of the German staff on the usages of

[1] "We are up in a very real sense against the devil incarnate." —Letter to *The Times*, June 1915, of Dr. Furse, Bishop of Pretoria.

war, began, from the month of September, to appear in great numbers. In the fifteen editions printed in this same month of the posthumous and prophetic book of Professor Cramb, in the penny and twopenny pamphlets published by the University of Oxford, every one was able to study the main outlines of the mystical and cynical philosophy of Might and War, the Prussian theory of the Absolute State, the anti-Christian religion and ethics of the Superman. In a country where many men scarcely dare to pronounce the word "hell" above a whisper, Nietzsche's blasphemous inversion of divine words seemed to call for fire from heaven. With regard to the others, the academic bores with their tirades about hate and conquest, amazement was mingled with a feeling of ridicule. To England, scornful of systems and of pure ideas, and who nevertheless has produced philosophers (the least systematic of all, the apostles of empiricism and induction), but in a spontaneous way, and without taking the trouble to teach philosophy in her schools, to this open-air people of action and common sense, whose colleges and universities aim chiefly at producing gentlemen and sportsmen, to these men, so unpedantic that they refuse to regard learning, and one might almost say, thought, as belonging to the highest range of values, it seemed incongruous and almost amusing, that this awful war should have been first conceived in historical and philological academies and that somniferous lucubrations on the special virtues and mission of the Teutonic race, the greatness of the Holy

Roman Empire, and the World conceived as Will, could ever have been taken in such fierce earnestness. Certainly the lack of humour verged on the ludicrous; and in spite of all the pretensions of Germany to the higher civilisation, one detected in her will to reign by "frightfulness," something laborious and provincial which at times made you laugh, and at times, as Kipling wrote to a French friend, "seemed to crown the horror." One wondered to discover that so much pride and rage could have accumulated in the souls of spectacled doctors, and one called to mind the definition once given by Lord Palmerston of the country which with its terrible explosion was now astounding the civilised world: "a land of damned professors" —damned indeed!

In the same way the pride of the German people appeared infernal, and frequently, too, ill-bred and grotesque. The whole German attitude shocked fundamentally not only the English conscience, but, what is perhaps worse, the English sense of propriety, not less ancient and profound. The impression was the same as if a man, who hitherto had been taken for a *gentleman*, were all at once to begin to gesticulate and rave about his greatness and his hatred. For an Englishman, who is bound all his life by a convention hostile to all natural expression, and who masters in himself, and never supposes in others, violent emotions and instinctive impulses, hatred, and still more the manifestation of it, are not only condemned by Christian morals, but are the mark of a rebel against good form, which consists in self-control,

in destroying, or at least repressing in oneself, anything opposed to ordinary and orderly appearances. Talk of hatred thus distinguishes the *non-gentleman* from the *gentleman*, and usually reveals a primitive nature: after all, did not the Germans themselves speak of their hatred as "elemental." In the opinion of a mature society which only knows its own free, comfortable and polished life, a life in which emotion now seems to be as much vetoed as duelling, the state of mind revealed by hymns of hatred, by the imprecation *Gott strafe England*, seemed strangely naïve. A caricature in *Punch*, now famous, showed a worthy German family assembled around the coffee-pot for its morning exercises in hatred: the *Herr Papa*, boorish, with bristling hair and heavy moustache, the voluminous mamma clad in a dressing-gown, and, receiving their teaching with docility, the *Backfische* daughters, the small schoolboy, all, down to the *Dachshund*, practising, in conscientious attitudes, frowns and rolling eyes —the *Augenrollen*, which is the sign of threatening fury, and which civilians, in a country where the military rules, have learnt from the officers.

But, in the Teutonic manifestations of hatred, something much worse than a want of education was to be noticed: a profound lack of balance, a nervous excitement, a tendency to hysteria which the Englishman despises above everything, and which according to him is incompatible with the dignity—he does not say any longer of a gentleman, but simply of a man. As Kipling wrote again, "it is not thus that a great people expresses itself,"

and it was taken as a sign of "a *she* nation." Everything seemed to show that Germany was incapable of that resistance to impulse, of that will which masters reflex action; in a word, of that self-control which is the main element of manliness. It was remembered that, replying to Sir Edward Goschen, when the latter informed him that England would never tolerate the violation of Belgian neutrality, the German Chancellor had launched into a "harangue" (the word is unusual in England) of twenty minutes, and that he had seemed "very excited," "very agitated," to such a degree that the British ambassador had thought it wise to give up the discussion. The same symptoms of fever and mental disturbance appeared in the newspaper articles, in the manifestoes issued by the "intellectuals," extolling the virtues and superiority of Germany: they exaggerated, and according to English ethics exaggeration is a sign of moral weakness. No less significant was the national craze for Zeppelins and giant howitzers. But more than anything else, war conceived and carried on in the German fashion, as a carnival in which the human animal loses all restraint, orgies of blood after frenzies of hate, pointed to insanity. The culture of the nation, which was aiming at teaching its *Kultur* to England and France, was revealed as powerless to repress in itself those base instincts which bring man down to the level of the gorilla. With a conviction and a contempt much deeper, because silent and unexpressed, the Englishman saw the German as the German had seen him, and pro-

nounced him destitute of real culture, incapable of efficient will and discipline. Thus the principles of two civilisations, that of military autocracy and that of puritanism, confronted one another with similar condemnation. German culture, scientific and utilitarian, providing a community with the means of dominating the foreigner; English culture, by which the individual learns to dominate himself. German will, that of a society which is directed by the State as an army by its general; and English will, that of the man who is master of himself and responsible but to himself alone, who decides for himself and is restrained by his conscience only, a conscience which has been developed by three hundred and fifty years of biblical rigour. German discipline, lastly, imposed from without by the superior on the inferior, and maintained by the prestige of the sword and memories of the rod; English discipline, which springs from within, that of the inner self, which, recognising a law, because it has the instinct of and the craving for order, freely submits to it and defends it. To these contrasts, more or less clearly perceived, were added the invincible differences of methods and spontaneous mental tendencies. The Englishman, accustomed to judge everything by his sensations and experience, was astonished at the obstinacy of the German in regarding him, on the word of the philologists, as a " cousin "—a hateful cousin, it is true, because a traitor to his family. In every respect he felt himself to be the reverse of the Teuton.

Verbal expressions of hatred were followed by deliberate outrages — acts no less extraordinary than the words, and in which hatred was combined with cowardice. Zeppelins aiming their bombs at sleeping and defenceless country towns, attacks by cruisers which suddenly appeared in the morning before watering-places and scuttled off after a slaughter of children. Then the submarines: merchant ships and fishing-boats sunk without warning, German sailors laughing at the drowning agonies of a crew, and, crowning all, the horror of the *Lusitania*, wholesale and premeditated murder, a criminal attack on those whom the chivalrous nations of the West regard as sacred—women, young girls and children. Add to this systematic insult: the determination to strike at the pride and self-respect of England by practising cruelty on defenceless men, by subjecting British prisoners to special treatment, by starving and bullying them, by choosing them for the most objectionable work; by shutting up captive officers in cattle-trucks for whole days at a time, and if one of them tried to come out, by kicking him back again, in order to reduce them to filth and degradation, bring them down to the level of animals, under the eyes of their men, and amidst the coarse jokes of the crowd which came to see these English gentlemen imprisoned in the train, and rejoiced thus to revenge the vague uneasiness it had formerly felt in the presence of their superior civilisation and dignity. Such crimes and insults stung the country in its most sensitive and intimate fibre, and roused at last in

the deeper masses the fighting temper, a passion ever growing in intensity, unexpressed, it is true, but all the more terrible on that account. There was now no need to talk of the danger of England in order to stimulate her men to ask for rifles. Thus once more, by his blindness to psychological values, the dull and malevolent German had committed an egregious blunder. The slowness of the English mind to be stirred and to change its habits, the impotence of the English Government to carry on a war if it is not backed by the whole opinion of the nation, the inadequacies of a volunteer army which, moreover, had to be improvised, these had been invaluable trumps in Germany's hand. Without any military profit, for the mere pleasure of the low insult which calls forth but contempt in return, Germany behaved exactly in the way which, more rapidly than any other, was to stir up the spirit of England, weld all parties in the same determination to fight to the finish, and increase the rate at which the new armies were being recruited. Some of these actions were actually longed for by thinking Englishmen. At a moment when recruiting seemed to be slowing down, a friend across the water wrote to me: "If only we could have a little German raid on the East coast!" A week after, enemy cruisers were bombarding Scarborough and Hartlepool, and the rate of enlistment began to rise at once. Since then worse horrors have been seen—murder of English wounded, asphyxiating gas, the slow and torturing effects of which have been more fully described by the English papers

than by ours, liquid flame, poisoned wells in South Africa: all these were so many reasons for going to the front; and some posters which in every town are calling on young men to do their duty, merely repeat without a single word of commentary these crimes and outrages. Last May, in the suburbs of London, a friend told me how he had lost his gardener. He came one fine morning, twisting his cap about in his hands. "Well, sir," he said, "I've been reading about this gas business, and somehow I can't stand it any longer: I feel I have got to enlist!" And in Oxfordshire a landlord told me, this time with regard to the *Lusitania*, a similar farewell speech from a young farmer. Moral indignation, a revolt of the conscience, the strong feeling which prevents a man from passively watching a cowardly act of cruelty, these are the causes and the reasons which finally concentrated on the war all the deepest spiritual forces of the nation. Of course, there is a minority which is able to appreciate the danger without seeing the enemy landing: it is to ensure the present and future safety of their country that these are resolved to-day on a fight to a finish. But for the great masses of the people, who cannot bring themselves to conceive a German army on English soil, there is no question of the safety of the country, or even of the struggle for a democratic ideal of justice and liberty against a principle of aggressive autocracy. With them it is a question of much older and more general things: of the fight against evil, against the powers of sin and crime, against

Satan, the enemy of God [1] and man, the old dragon whom the knights of former days went out to fight, whom all the efforts of religion and civilisation, of Christian and civilised England have been directed throughout the centuries to defeating and driving back, foot by foot, to the abyss. This idea, which the German orgy of pride and hatred has done so much to create, is accompanied by a feeling quite different from hatred: execration—an idea and a feeling which are religious, and therefore of infinite power. Such ideas never die, except with the death of the man who forms them, or with the destruction of their object. That is why, whether he says it or not, every Englishman to-day is quite sure that the present struggle is a fight to a finish. In vain does Germany, having missed her mark, try periodically to raise a talk of peace: the moral forces which she has brought into being will not be laid. Moreover, it is known from experience that the enemy does not consider himself bound by a treaty (and in the history of the war no fact has more "shocked" the English conscience than this), consequently it is impossible to treat with him or to live with him; and therefore there is nothing for it but to break his power for ever, or to die in the attempt. Add to this that in England such an idea, once formed and diffused, tends to endure indefinitely. It has always taken much time to overcome the inertia of a nation in whom the force of habit is so great, and make it change its move-

[1] *God's other foe* is the way in which Germany was spoken of in a poem recently published in the *Daily Chronicle*.

ment and its direction. But, in a mass, the slower the movement is at the start, the longer will this quality of inertia make it last. Against Germany, of whom but yesterday it knew nothing, this nation is now only beginning to move as a whole. The war will come to an end one day, but England will never forget.

September 1915.

THE ILLUSION OF SECURITY

I

In London, last May, the main outlines of the special psychology which we have described could be easily perceived, and also the enormous size of the mass which was to be set in motion—a mass which can absorb such an infinite force before any change in direction can be noticed. Even a foreigner could not resist the general illusion. At the sight of this mass, a strong mental effort was necessary to keep in mind the idea of imminent danger: a danger which is certain for this country until it has changed, into visible and systematically directed forces of attack, the whole of its inner and latent energy. One fell a prey to the silent and tranquillising suggestion of things. The enormous magnitude of the town, of its traffic, accumulated wealth, and population, the ceaseless tides of life, youth and hurrying crowds, the new honeycombs of this immense hive of brick which, this year as in the years before, keeps spreading over the surrounding country: all this was enhanced by the contrast with the pathetic emptiness and solemn silence of Paris, a Paris which has been pumped dry of its vital substance

by mobilisation. I remember the Thames below London Bridge, the wharves, the docks, the clusters of great steamers, still panting after a long run. I remember the Bank, the black ant-hill of the City, the great main arteries, the Strand, Piccadilly, Holborn, Oxford Street, the motley and closely packed rows of large motor-buses, the never-ending traffic, so rapid yet so orderly, which a vast and imperturbable policeman, glove in hand, regulates with a scarcely perceptible turn of his hand. And then, again, an endless suburb, through which we rushed on a clear June evening, as far as the last rows of houses, pushed out suddenly into a landscape, which but five years ago was pure country. The effect was that of a spontaneous growth, of a tentacle which has stretched outwards silent and imperceptible. For miles and miles the broad, dim, shining street, the shops with windows to the top, crammed in the English way from floor to ceiling with groceries, meat, fruit and clothing—the fishmongers' shops where great silvery salmon gleam beneath the gas-jets, between transparent blocks of ice: a wealth of goods still flowing in, in spite of submarines, from every corner of the world. And no less full the flow of human life: children, girls chiefly, young men too, of whom many in khaki, fresh faces that the damp coolness of the air sets aglow. And still the shops flew past, rows upon rows of buildings, as if turned out by machinery, as if set up by twenties or fifties at a time, and the churches, and then all at once the green, unbounded vista of a park. There was no difference between the successive parishes: it was

all the same continuous growth, the same inexhaustible proliferation, which repeats cells of the same type unchangingly, as in the hive of a given type of bee, of which each generation, each individual, carries in itself, unknowingly, the principle, the law and invisible germ. A world apart, springing from itself and knowing nothing but itself, a world that manifests a power of order and organisation no less active than that of Germany, and yet how different! much older, and much slower in its processes; for it is inspired far less by rational thought and conscious will than by natural instinct, and it proceeds more in the manner of an elementary and unconscious form of life, whose ancient branches are ever and again covered with fresh buds.

And then again, established and respected wealth, the cold, stately vistas of mansions in the West End, fading into the grey distance in a dim veil of mist, the rows of great clubs, fortresses of silence and security, from which all anxiety, all care, seem shut out, together with the roar of the street, by the thick plate glass, where the attendance is automatically perfect, where all is luxury, calm and massive as the monumental leather arm-chairs in which each one sits apart, turning the crackling, glazed sixteen-page newspapers. And close by, behind noble arches, the parks, the joy and the wonder of the flowers, the culminating triumph of the learned and traditional labour of a host of gardeners: masses of rhododendrons in a murmuring cloud of bees; irises on the banks of some free Serpentine where girls are being rowed

along; gorgeous and delicate azaleas, lawns whose shaven green turf reveals centuries of care; wild dells where primrose, hawthorn, foxglove and wild rose mark, as in the open country, the progress of the season; long avenues of ancient oaks reminding one of the great estates and the feudal landscapes of England—and yonder, completing the illusion of country within town, the flash of some rider, some childish figure, locks streaming in the wind, carried along by her hunter.

No. Close as was the danger, great as was the part already taken by the country in the common effort of the Allies, the appearance of England was not altered by it. Thus, when a great and luxurious *Titanic* is in danger, and the officers are already trying to ward off the peril, the passengers fail to realise the threatening catastrophe, the bands go on playing in the saloons, not a single electric light has yet gone out, the waiters are still busy serving tea, and everywhere the usual impression of order, discipline and quiet power is to be felt. Still more than the sight of material greatness does this feeling make for confidence. For visible things are but a result: the essential matter is the moral and social principle which is at their root, and lives unconsciously in each soul. Sustained energy, steadfast effort, devotion to duty, loyalty to the memory and customs of the national past, to the still living institutions which stand for that past, proud respect for accepted moral authority, for the law, for the king and for oneself, these indeed seem to form a collective spiritual power assured of its own strength and of its infinite future.

II

This impression of fixed and secure order I felt in a less definable, yet still deeper degree in the country, that country-side which is so purely English, just as that of Brittany is only Breton, and that of Japan nothing but Japanese, by reason of the millennial marriage between the land and the people, which has resulted in each sharing in the inmost nature of the other. A solemn, pastoral country in which the trees, perhaps by reason of the neighbouring sea, are of a deeper green than elsewhere. Never have I known it so beautiful and so deeply charged with meaning as in the matchless light which prevailed during those weeks of May and June, and which lengthened out from day to day, as if never to pass away. There was all the freshness and luxuriance of a spring-time which is later than ours by a month: it was a surprise to find so late the hedges loaded with a thicker and colder snow of hawthorn blossom, the lilac just opening, and in the meadows such sheets of buttercups as we never see in France. By a mental effort only was it possible to remember the horrors of the war, the germ-infected mud of Flanders, the agonies under shrapnel and chlorine; but when one glanced around, the splendid magic of Nature seemed to give the lie to all this, a golden stillness thrilling with the invisible raptures of the lark, or the two sweet, full notes of the cuckoo, coming who could tell from how far, telling of thick and leafy shade, of the fulness of spring. Few human

beings to be seen, families of horses grazing in the meadows, the foals beside their dams, cattle lying amidst the grass and flowers, under the patriarchal oaks whose shadows form blue islands in the shining sea of buttercups. The great, uneven circle of the horizon merging into blue on the distant azure of the sky. And then those never-ending evenings, the twilights of the north, the pale, even radiance in which everything becomes yet stiller, in which the flowers seem colder, calmer and more wonderful. Mornings of endless purity, a light as of Eden, the pastoral land becoming then a vision of legend, as though the youth of the world had returned to last for ever. Oh, the irony of this peace falling from the blue above as if to enfold our earth in benediction! Browning's lines came unsought to one's lips—

> "Morning's at seven . . .
> The lark's on the wing,
> The snail's on the thorn,
> God's in His heaven,
> All's right with the world. . . ."[12]

All's right with the world: in addition to this universal deceptiveness of nature in this old shire of Oxford, the very heart of England, the peculiarly English illusion could be felt much more directly and deeply than in the town; the stability, the ancient order of the country—an order, so it seemed, as inviolable as the land which no invader's foot has trod since the Conquest. The old social organisation of this country here revealed itself to the eye. First, almost hidden

behind its oaks and its great cedars, standing in the midst of an estate inscribed already, perhaps, by the Conqueror in his Domesday Book, is the manor house, the long, rectangular building of stone where the squire lives, whose fathers legally governed the parish which, through the authority of the dim yet deeply rooted feudal tradition, he still virtually governs. A little way off, amidst the green mounds of the churchyard, rises the low, square tower of the small Norman church, covered with ivy to its battlements; and close beside it, in the midst of fair tennis lawns, stands the goodly flower-covered house of the rector—the spiritual and truly active head of this little world, as the squire is its lay patron—a "gentleman" like him, since he is a priest and as such admitted to the same caste. A little way off, behind some hay-stacks, a slate-covered roof reveals another social category, that of the farmers,—farmers from father to son, descendants of the ancient yeomen, and who, in spite of their pianos and their daughters in white *piqué*, remain quite distinct. Then, down yonder, the village, where the poor live, those labourers who hire themselves out and own nothing, and whose sires were the true aborigines and served the same glebe. Christmas card cottages, roofs of thatch and moss, with curling blue smoke, which sink low over the tapestry of climbing roses, over the tiny diamond panes of the ancient windows of long ago; small gardens blazing with the splendour of the season: irises, tulips, poppies, peonies, hollyhocks; and in front of them the common, the village green, which

Shakespeare might have seen, under whose ancestral trees a comedy of Shakespeare would be in keeping, and where little girls in light cotton frocks are dancing as in ages past their grand-dames danced: a swarm of pink and blue butterflies in the green shade.

You must come on a Sunday, as the English love to do, to seek peace and moral assurance in the atmosphere of this old world. It is in its essence Christian: the spirit can be felt floating over the fields, emanating on that day, from the pealing of the bell, so slow and so monotonous, from the humble Norman nave in which the small community is gathering—each in his station, respecting an immemorial order, each yielding to the influence, vague but solemn, of the unchanging rite. Drop by drop, spaced out by the sleepy silence of the fields, the bell lets its one note fall, ever the same, and under the peaceful influence the inmost soul of this countryside rises, —an all-important element in the soul of England. For if the numbers, the visible energies, the great developments of England, are no longer found here to-day, if the old rural world is, from the economic and social point of view, but a survival, a carefully cherished memory, the visions which it summons up still have power. All art and literature, from the pictures of the great landscape painters, from the novels of Meredith and George Eliot, down to Christmas cards and penny novelettes, contribute to their preservation. Kipling has described the home-sickness of

the Indian civil servant, and the way it springs from memories of the village, of the village church, and the fields sleeping in their Sabbath peace. In town one lives as one can: town is a factory for work and profit. But in the country, real England still lives, its ancient root persisting and active. Here is the home of tradition worshipped by Englishmen; here is the only social hierarchy recognised by them, the higher caste of which has so long ruled the country and still holds its spell over every mind: when one has used the words *county people, landed gentry*, there is nothing more to be said.

It is one of the curious features of this strange country, that the moral principle of civilisation and society is, to so great an extent, essentially aristocratic and rural, even though its activities are chiefly industrial and commercial, even though the immense majority of its people are crowded into huge brick cities under an everlasting pall of factory smoke—even though, politically, it is more and more tending towards social democracy. The contrast thus existing between this principle of order and culture and the conditions really prevailing to-day, is all the more striking to us because in our country the factors are reversed. France, in spite of the great development of her manufactures, still remains a community where life and activities are in the main rural. And yet the forms of civilisation and of intellect, the conceptions of the ideal, have been, in France, for the last three centuries, of urban type and origin, the country being but a holiday place and the home of peasants.

For one must distinguish between the great masses of a people and those who are its spiritual leaders, because they have prestige. From the eighteenth century onwards, the town has been the magnet in France, and the manor house in England; this is made clear by the paintings of the period. Nearly all English portraits are of squires and their families: untroubled faces used to the open air, with the usual background of leafy park. The French portraits, on the contrary—witty features, sparkling eyes, waggish lips in a setting of panelling and curtains—reveal the refinements, the pleasures and vivacity of drawing-room life. The same difference is apparent between the types of our higher *bourgeoisie* and that of the English gentry (who can show enthusiasm for golf); and the contrast of the two principles is still more striking if, for instance, our *lycées* be compared with the public schools of England: I mean those which lead, which the others try to imitate, and which aim much less at providing the boy with intellectual equipment and training than at shaping him with physical and moral discipline on the type of the gentleman. Such schools are nearly always in the country, surrounded by fields and lawns; and the life the boys lead there, as later on at the old universities of Oxford and Cambridge, resembles, in its games, its setting and manners, that of the manor house.

Thus persists in England the worship and the influence of a social caste only too certain that its order and its peace are assured. An influence more and more ideal, sentimental and undefined, as

industrial democracy extends and speaks more clearly, and for this reason all the stronger. It is like a family or clan religion, more sacred by the persistence of memory and by all that we feel of the difference between modern life and the olden times. English hearts are more sensitive than others to such spells, and the magic of this rural world springs from the past that seems to endure there alive for ever. It tells of the power and stability of tradition. Everything in it seems to say, like the old Python of the Jungle: "What has been shall be"; everything there seems to confirm the ancient saying, so truly English, which Mr. Lloyd George recently urged Parliament to renounce: *the good thing is the old thing*. Such is the silent suggestion which comes from the manor house, from the rose-decked cottages, from the slow, periodic labours of the fields, from those spreading oaks whose protecting reign endures so long—and which no one would ever dream of felling; from those meadows and hedges that have never changed within living memory, from all those things which the hand of time has clothed with harmonious beauty. Over these gardens lies an enchantment, as if they had been asleep a thousand years, in a slumber which has long passed into the soul of this rural people; and this tranquillity seems to be the visible and ever-enduring peace of England. To-day these influences act in the same way as, in the great cities, the mighty sense of life, of a teeming life, strong by its law, and which cannot but go on developing for ever. In country, as well as in town, and

more so even, something of the deep foundations of England can be perceived, and the impression is that of immovable stability. Hence, since the beginning of the war, the incessant and, to a foreign eye, paradoxical effort of the most patriotic in the educated and governing classes, to alarm the country. The squire in the village meetings, the rector in his pulpit, the Cabinet ministers, the great authoritative voices of the nation addressing the city crowds—a Rosebery, a Beresford, a Milner, a Balfour, a Curzon, a Carson—and regularly the magazine and newspaper writers, all alike work to this end.

Thus in the little church of the truly Christian village where a special prayer is offered for the enemy, and where God is implored not to allow hatred and desire for vengeance to enter English hearts, I heard the clergyman explaining the national danger to the labourers and farmers, telling them how, if Germany succeeded in ruling from Hamburg to Dieppe and dominating Europe, her permission would be necessary not only for the continued existence of England in a political sense, but for the continued bringing of food to English tables. Hammering the pulpit with his fist, speaking with the genial energy of a leader talking to his men, and well conscious of his authority, he was pointing out their duty to the young men. Yes, conscription was near at hand, but it was not yet too late to go and fight as true men, as Englishmen—of their own free will. At the church door, in the porch—and he

pointed to it—was a list of honour, written in his own hand, and giving the names of the attested men in the parish. Well, once conscription was passed, it would be too late to figure on that list; those who wished to see their names on it had better make haste!

Hymns and prayers were resumed. Calm and solemnising influence of this half-patriarchal service! What naked, direct, touching authority have these biblical words, the majesty of which is still further enhanced by the archaic English of the sixteenth century! Under the stirring influence of the music, and the ritual solemnity of the service, one seemed to feel the secret life of England's ancient heart—its calm and regular beat. Looking along the wall of an aisle, I saw row after row of inscriptions; the names of the squires in their order of succession since 1750; at their side in a column were those of the rectors. Now, as the service drew to a close, the priest alone before the altar at the further end of the choir, standing straight with his scarlet stole, was facing the congregation and uttering the commandments of the Law. Most impressive the sheer severity of this ancient version from the Hebrew, in which the archaic *Thou shalt not*, seems, after each thrilling interval of silence, to emphasize the power of the imperious prohibition. At the close, a ceremony special to war-time: the people standing, farmers and labourers, for the National Anthem, led by the choir; a choir in three rows—three generations: the youngest in front, the urchins of the parish, with very serious

faces, in their white surplices similar to those of their elders—the tiny boys of eight and ten, gravely taking in, as their fathers and their ancestors did at their age, the essential rhythms of English life.

This old rural world of England has done much to maintain, by its spirit and prestige, the habitual delays and sleepiness of this country. But once let the idea of national danger penetrate, and this same prestige will rouse religiously the determination to resist and conquer, for this rustic world shows England in her ancient and almost legendary form, a form that inspires sentiment, and instilled with all the powers of feeling and poetry. Indeed, this is to-day the main reason of its survival. Economically these fields and woods bring in but little revenue: they are a luxury of which the cost is borne by the aristocracy and the gentry—a luxury, like the park and the old castle with its coats of arms, that an ancient family loves to maintain, along with certain traditions, out of respect for itself, and in honour of its ancestors. There survives the past of England, there remain the footprints of the generations who lived a very similar life in the same unchanging landscape. In these country districts, where the old unwritten law is as much respected as the visible boundaries, everything inclines the soul to gravity, and, it may be said, even to veneration; a feeling of sanctity seems to pervade this soil as that of Japan, and the soldier carries this feeling with him when the

safety of his country is really at stake: there is religion in this patriotism as in that of the Russians. It is not without reason that the author of the well-known pages on France, first published by *The Times*,[1] began his meditations on the war with a prelude, in which he conjured up a vision of the country-side, and a village hushed in the peace of an English Sabbath. And it is the same deep spring of feeling and will which a certain image of a rural landscape posted by the recruiting committee on the walls of all the great towns sought to reach. It showed a village steeple, some thatched roofs, spikes of pink hollyhocks, calm hills asleep in the sun. And as a motto this mere question: "Isn't this worth fighting for?"

In my own mind even, there began to revive something long forgotten, something of long ago, an impression received, no doubt, in childhood from this English land. I was sitting under one of the venerable oaks, and my eyes, tired with London, were resting on the fresh green of the ephemeral foliage which had woven itself, as in each succeeding spring of the past, around the strong and ancient branches. In the luxuriance of this new life, in the permanence of the slowly built-up form which supports it and subjects it, whilst continuously growing and expanding, to a certain order, I seemed to see the very image of this nation. How many generations have received their being and their law from her enduring substance and principle? How many generations

[1] Clutton-Brock, *Thoughts on the War*.

have been filled with the pride, the peace and the confidence which such rooted strength inspires? Shakespeare's lines came into my mind in which he asserts this confidence and disdain of all foreign menace, together with the proud and religious love for the Christian island home.

> . . . this sceptred isle,
> This fortress, built by Nature and herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea
> Which serves it in the office of a wall
> Against the envy of less happy lands,
> This blessed plot, this earth, this England,
> Renowned . . .
> For Christian service and true Chivalry.[1]

[1] *King Richard II.*, Act II., Scene 1.

THE APPEAL TO CONSCIENCE

I

In London, whose boundless life seemed so little changed by the war, one single feature, strange to a foreigner, and everywhere present, brought clearly before the eye at the same time what was happening, and one of the root principles of this community: its invincible individualism. I refer to the unique methods of the recruiting propaganda, to the picturesque clamour of the posters shouting in the ears of the crowd England's need and the necessity for enlisting. What other people ever sought to raise an army in this fashion? When I saw those extraordinary pictures I felt once more what every one feels as soon as he has crossed the twenty miles of the Channel. I felt that this is a country apart—*toto divisos orbe Britannos*—and that it contrasts with every continental nation; of this the Englishman has more than a suspicion when, to define certain types, gestures, expressions and manners, he uses the epithet "continental." For one who was trying to understand how England was reacting to the German attack, the plainest of these posters was the most significant, and it bore no picture at all;

nothing but five autograph lines in the delicate, slanting writing of Lord Kitchener, followed by his signature. There was not a single note of exclamation; the tone of this document was as simple as its appearance: "I said that I would warn the country when more men were needed for the war. The moment has arrived. I now demand three hundred thousand recruits for the new armies. Those who are engaged in the manufacture of war material must not leave their work. It is to those who are not doing their duty that my appeal is addressed." This brief notice is in the same style as the Press advertisements publishing the needs of private charitable institutions: "The Secretary of —— Hospital informs the public that this year's balance sheet shows a deficit of £——. Subscriptions may be sent to Mr. Z——, honorary treasurer." That is all: the following day subscriptions begin to flow in. These few instances enable us to put our finger on the chief social principle of this country, and once it is understood, the two strange facts which in this war have distinguished England from all other belligerents become intelligible: the one is that, realising that she had to strain every nerve, she did not at once decide in favour of compulsory military service—the other, that, without imposing this obligation on her citizens, she was nevertheless able to raise in a few months several millions of soldiers, and this without ever having known invasion.

This fundamental principle—of political and religious origin—is that the Englishman, having

won his liberty from the central power by an age-long effort, and being responsible to God for all his acts, alone governs his person and life. No doubt the State to-day, having become democratic, tends by ever-increasing supervision and compulsion to gain more power and authority. But these new developments are limited as yet to certain forms of control: they are visible chiefly in matters of taxation and social hygiene. On the whole, in the mind of the Englishman, who has been reproached for what Mr. Wells calls State-blindness, the ancient principle still survives: "self-government" of the individual, and as its necessary corollary for most works of public interest, voluntary association, which in time becomes traditional. Such is the idea, now almost instinctive, which has created, and supports, so many institutions and active societies, so many organs of political and social life, which are not, as in other countries, off-shoots from, or departments of, the State: schools, colleges, universities, churches, hospitals, museums, and, a few years ago, regiments of "volunteers" and "yeomanry," private bodies who had but to give notice to the local magistrate when they wished to meet and drill in the public square. To-day may be added to this list the Territorial Army, the Special Reserve, and the Service Army. It is in the working of associations which have reached the traditional stage in local government and administration that are to be found the classic examples of a system whose constant feature is, like that of everything English, to be absolutely devoid of system, since it

acts almost unconsciously. In these spheres there is no supervision on the part of the State, no bureaucratic inspection, either secret or public, by officials appointed by the central power and representing its policy. There is nothing similar to our *Préfet.* This is why, a few months before the war, without any interference or active opposition on the part of the Government, Sir Edward Carson was seen to raise and drill a body of militia for the unconcealed purpose of rebellion. But as the Home Rule Bill was not yet on the statute book this was merely a threat of rebellion, and Sir Edward was only using the privilege of every Englishman, which is to spread his conviction and, so long as he does not transgress established laws, to enter freely into association with other men, for the purpose of realizing it. Every Sunday, about eleven o'clock in the morning, you can see, in Hyde Park, near the Marble Arch, this elementary and characteristic phenomenon of English society can be studied. A man, generally a clerk or a shopkeeper, has thought out some religious or political idea which, if accepted, will secure the salvation of England or of the human race. He has dreamt of it for weeks and months; he has told it to a friend who now shares his belief: the next thing is to spread it amongst the public. They take a chair and a big umbrella and go to the Park. Each in his turn gets up on the chair and tries his best to be eloquent. Often, in order to attract an audience, they hire a small harmonium and sing: to what extent the Salvation Army has used this kind of advertisement every one

knows. An idea and a method of the same kind are to be found in the flaming recruiting posters. In this country, where opinion is supreme, the essential thing is always to spread an opinion, with a view to start organised and collective action: and for this it is necessary to reach the inner conscience of the self-governing man, that private and secluded sanctum where he finds his motives of action, and there to create the emotion from which the desired act will spring. And probably, because this is the fundamental fact of English social life, it is so universally respected. Hence those meetings, processions and street preachings, which seem to the foreigner one of the singular features of England. Whatever the idea which draws them together, they all prove the "liberty of the Subject" to utter the private thought which is the principle of his conduct. So long as the demonstrators do really govern themselves (and they are always presumed to be capable of doing so), so long as they are orderly, and do not trespass on the liberty or property of others, the State can do nothing but watch the proceedings. Such was its attitude when, in 1898, the centenary of the landing of the French Revolutionary troops was celebrated in Ireland, under the tolerant eyes of placid policemen.

Probably unseen precautions had been taken. Usually they are dismissed: such agitations are a part of the normal life of the country, one may almost say of its order, for they comply with the limits imposed by the law. Indeed, since the ethical ideal of a given society always corresponds

to its type and principle, the special feature of the moral code which prevails in this country of "self-government"; is the supreme value ascribed to personal discipline and self-control. Character, will-power to govern one's self, individually and collectively, that, above all other things, has been for generations the object of education in those old public schools of the gentry, which are establishments for physical and moral culture much more than for learning, and the example and prestige of which inspire all the others—even those new secondary schools in town and country, which profess to be democratic. Character they make a point of developing, by the freedom they allow the boy and the responsibility they put upon him, and still more deliberately by means of the so-called "educative" games which teach him "to play for the team," as Kipling would say, and such is indeed the essential principle of the men he loves and describes.[1]

[1] The aristocratic ideals and discipline of physical and moral bearing tend by reason of their prestige to inspire the schools of another caste. The head mistress of a county secondary school told the writer that in these establishments they made it a point to have none but ladies of education as teachers (it is well known what the word *lady* means when taken in its strict sense). In the same way he was told at Cambridge that the scholars from these secondary schools and, originally, sometimes, from board schools, are scattered amongst the colleges in order that they may be influenced by the higher environment and not transform the environment in the direction of their original habits. In England the type of civilisation, life and manners, which tends to spread, comes from above. Looked at from its bad side this tendency is called "snobbishness." Kipling says that modern England is a democracy of aristocrats; and Galsworthy that England is a mixture of aristocratic and democratic feelings incomprehensible to a foreigner.

The idea is in its origin religious and puritan as well as political. It is, essentially, that a man's fate depends on himself alone, for to decide his everlasting destiny, no priestly power, no ceremony, no act or formula avails—nothing but his conduct, which is decided by his own free and responsible will. It is permissible to use every effort to persuade this will, to present it with motives of action or abstention: it is not permissible to compel it, and its primary duty is to resist compulsion. The great puritan poet defines it "the unconquerable will not to yield." It is the essential part of every human soul, something sacred, situated in that inmost recess, that central shrine which must remain closed to all other men. This accounts for certain characteristic features of English life: for instance, a girl is always left to herself to receive, accept, or refuse a proposal of marriage. If she accepts it she will announce her betrothal to her parents, for she is her own mistress and responsible to herself alone; she alone has the right to bestow herself, and to choose her life for good or ill. It would be a "liberty" on the part of her nearest relation if they allowed themselves to advise her. In the same way it rests with every Englishman to decide whether he will give or refuse himself to his country. Such a renunciation of his right to himself can be but voluntary. Remember, by the way, that the word "obligation," which a French mind associates with the commands of morality and honour as well as with legal necessity, is generally translated into English as "compulsion,"

so that "military obligation," becoming "compulsory service," takes on the appearance of enforced slavery. Now to *compel* an Englishman to give up his person, his soul or his conscience, the State is powerless.[1] The authority by which he is ruled is not outside and above himself, but *in* himself. It is the silent longing for order, it is the idea of the discipline which is necessary when men are to work together, and for which he has so strong an instinct; it is, in fact, the cold and imperative idea of duty, it is that conscience to which Nelson appealed in words so simple, but for the Englishman stronger than any proclamation.[2] The purely pragmatic character which Protestantism has taken in England is well known. It has been reduced almost to a mere code of ethics, but for centuries, during the nineteenth as at the beginning of the seventeenth, it was the most exacting and rigid of all codes. By teaching man that, to work out his salvation, he stands alone before an omnipotent Judge, Puritanism has cast him back upon himself and trained him for self-government. And no doubt, if religion in this country has assumed so individualistic and practical a character, the reason is to be found in a deep and natural tendency peculiar to this people, for at an early date

[1] It is by a consequence of this principle that, in England, to exempt a child from vaccination, the parents have only to declare that they have a conscientious objection to it.

[2] A cartoon in *T. P.'s Weekly* (October 1915) showed John Bull bowing his head in humiliation, whilst Mr. Lloyd George standing before him, corrects Nelson's phrase (*England expects every man to do his duty*) by striking out the word *expects* and replacing it with *compels*.

of its history, its political organisation developed in the same direction. The souls were independent of the priest, and all the nation, and the individuals thereof, were independent of the Crown. England had won her charters and her privileges as a free city might win them from its liege lord; England, for centuries, had been in the position of a free city which has become the property of its burgesses. These burgesses were for a long time a strictly limited class, an oligarchy, whose rights and duties were finally extended in the course of the nineteenth century to the whole people.

From such ancient principles—religious and political—special customs and ideas have developed. They govern the attitude of the Englishman in the face of the national danger, and produce the curious solution which England has found for the problem of life and death confronting her at the hands of an enemy with a strength of ten million soldiers. In this country of self-government and of voluntary association, the commonweal appears really to each man as his private weal. "Who cleared the land of England? Who made it inhabitable, who laid the foundations of its institutions? Your forefathers. Who made it what it is? Your fathers. Who must defend it? You, in order to transmit it to your children." No mystic personality like Holy Russia, no despotic idol like Germany, no ideal maternal figure like France, is this England. Rather an old ancestral estate, rich in relics and memories of the past,

in which the present generation has a life interest whilst the land itself belongs beforehand to the next, like the estates and castles of the aristocracy. Every Englishman is expected to look after that estate, his Country, just as he looks after his church, his parish, his town, or those charities in which he is interested, those societies of which he is a member; if he supports them so generously, if very often he leaves them, at the expense of his children, an important part of his fortune, it is because they have become—and sometimes more than his own children—a living part of himself. It was no sense of social justice but some such feeling which prompted the oligarchy in 1806 to vote, and themselves to assume almost all the burden of, that "income tax" which even that great Liberal and friend of the people, Mr. Gladstone, always longed to abolish, and which Mr. Lloyd George has so well developed and made use of for his democratic purposes. In the same way, by virtue of the Poor Law, the aristocracy paid all the rates, and supported the poor of the parishes of which they were, by birth, patrons and magistrates. The notion is inborn in the Englishman that his position in the community where he has property, and one or more votes (not many Englishmen had votes in 1806), is that of a shareholder to his company, that he is a "part-proprietor of the empire." The State above him is not the abstract, omnipotent, distant power which alone manages public affairs, to which we were accustomed by Louis XIV and Napoleon. More or less clearly, he feels that

the State (a word less commonly used than its French equivalent) is himself. Even at the present day, in case of riots or disorderly strikes, this feeling makes it incumbent on a gentleman to enrol himself a "special constable" and go, truncheon in hand, to defend the peace of his own street against the rioters.[1]

Soldiers enlisted on the voluntary system are but special constables enrolled against the national enemy. As a result of this old tradition the young men of the aristocracy, gentry, and upper middle class, at once came forward at the beginning of the war. Such was the force of opinion round them, that none of military age could have refrained without dishonour. In these classes there is not a family which has not given its sons; and most of them are in mourning.[2] But to the new democracy this duty had to be taught, for they had not been prepared for it by any previous experience, and their representatives hesitated to make it a legal obligation. They had received

[1] Speaking to the masters and workmen of the metal industries on the question of munitions, Mr. Lloyd George said, on June 4, 1915, at Liverpool: "I ask you to form yourselves into a committee of management for the organisation of the industrial resources of this district, so as to obtain the maximum of production. To the business men of this community, I say: Look on this business as your own. It is not the Government which is entering into negotiations with you. You *are* the Government. Your interests are involved in this enterprise, and I say the same to the workmen. It is also *their* business. . . ."

[2] At the University of Cambridge alone, whose students are recruited almost exclusively from the classes referred to, it was estimated on October 25, 1915, that 10,250 students and former students had enlisted (*Cambridge Review*).

no mandate from the country so to do; besides, to deprive the "subject" of the free possession of his own person, to compel his obedience, is held, in this country of "Habeas Corpus," as contrary, not only to all precedents, but to the "spirit of the constitution"; finally, since the peril was not yet evident to all, the ancient instincts of independence rose against the imposition of such a servitude: *Britons never, never will be slaves!* The question has not even been raised, of applying compulsory service to Ireland. And in Celtic, industrial, democratic Wales there has been reason to fear riots, such as broke out amongst a people of similar traditions, when Lincoln, in the course of the American Civil War, attempted to enforce military service. Yet even amongst these miners of Wales, so jealous of their interests and their rights, there were found, before the tenth month of the war, more than sixty thousand ready to assume freely this servitude as soon as the word "duty" was uttered.

II

Through all England, day after day, the appeal rang out an alarm bell to stir the country, and drag men out of the rut "business as usual;" to spread far and wide the impression of a great and immediate public danger. This was the business chiefly of the great newspapers to whose patriotic pessimism we have already referred. Then came the continuous, urgent exhortation to every young

man's conscience, an indefatigable propaganda of meetings, sermons, processions, open-air speeches, and all the activity of recruiting sergeants. The root idea was that a man should enlist just as he might join the Salvation Army, by virtue of a certain working of his mind, a new conviction, a perception of good and evil, justice and injustice, awakened in him by this active and well-organised campaign. The moral, protestant and puritanic character of this campaign was apparent from a first glance at the picture posters which covered the walls. They mark in one's memory for ever the profound crisis in the English national conscience. Through all their gaudiness one word incessantly recurs: *Duty*. The feeling of imperative duty is the suggestion aimed at by all these pictures, that form a matchless document on the inner nature of the English soul. Here, for example, is the familiar face, so shrewd, clear-sighted, soldier-like—as Kipling said, "*the war-wise face*"—of Lord Roberts, with his piercing glance, his air of precision telling of strength and voluntary discipline, of faithfulness and services loyally accomplished. And, beneath it, this motto: "*He did his duty; will you do yours?*" Here is the more massive and authoritative face of Lord Kitchener, looking straight into yours with steel grey eyes; his finger, raised imperiously, points at you; he utters the words printed on the bill: "Your Country wants YOU!" To stimulate conscience, the old devices of the great Methodist preachers are resorted to. In every individual of his congregation Wesley

endeavoured to create the sensation that to him personally he was speaking, that for him personally Christ died. The very same method is adopted by the soldiers and recruiting officers who stand up in motor-cars to address the crowd. I remember how one of these, a soldier back from the front, turned suddenly to some tall lads in caps, and pointing to a woman with two children clinging to her, cried: "For the women and children I am ready to go and fight again! but *you*, why should I go and risk my life for you?" In such manner a hundred pictures and mottos, on every wall, clamour at the passer-by. Here is a fine lad in khaki standing on a foreshortened map of Flanders, a clean-limbed, beaming young Englishman crying to every Englishman of his own age, with a wave of his cap: "Come and do your bit!" He who has ever stopped to watch in Holborn or the Strand a regiment march past, with its drums and fifes, will understand that poster of a crowd gaping at the fine new troops, proud, smart and trim — and the words underneath: "Don't stay with the loafers, come and join the men!" The young married man and father, who has come to the conclusion that his duty is to stay behind, working for his wife and children, has to face the picture of a middle class family man sitting hang-dog in his armchair, because his little boy of ten is innocently putting this question: "What were you doing, father, during the Great War?" Or else the appeal is to the girls and women; for love in England has always kept a

romantic, Christian, moral, idealistic flavour; a certain dreamy and poetic sentimentalism in the ethics of this people has associated it with long engagements and the ideals and laws of chivalry. Probably these appeals to the women of England were suggested by Ruskin's words: "It is from your lips that men learn their ideals of duty. Tell them to be brave and for you they will be brave!"[1] Take for example that symbolistic picture of a young Englishwoman standing at a window, who, with an imperious gesture, utters the single word: "Go!" and down below a squad of fine young fellows are seen swinging out on the march. If you are not well up in the manners of this country you may be a little startled by the following catechism: "Is your best boy in khaki? If not, why not? If he doesn't consider that you and his country are worth fighting for, do you think him worthy of you? Don't pity the girls you see going out walking alone. Probably their young men are in the ranks, fighting for them, for England and for you. If *yours* neglects his duty to his king and his country, the day may come, perhaps, when he will neglect *you*. Think of that and ask him to enlist *to-day*." Sometimes the appeal is to the experienced woman, the wife and mother: with what seriousness, with what a methodical setting forth of practical and moral arguments she is asked to reflect and to influence her men-folk. "To the women of Great Britain: (1) Have you read what the Germans

[1] *Crown of Wild Olive*, p. 129.

did when they invaded Belgium? Have you asked yourself what they would do if they invaded your country? (2) Do you understand clearly that your homes, your daughters, are threatened if you do not find more soldiers at once? (3) Do you understand that the single word 'Go!' uttered by you may send a man to fight for his king and country? (4) When the war is over, if it is asked whether your husband or your son was in it, must he keep silent because you would not let him go? (5) Will you not help to send a man to the army *to-day?*"

Will you not help? The very same words of appeal we have so often read in the tracts of religious, moral, charitable institutions—a prosaic but fervent appeal to free will, to good will, to the spirit of association and co-operation for the improvement of the world. Not in the style of some State department, but as the living voice of men of English blood appealing for their cause, this charge, with its numbered arguments, its medley of ethics and common sense, its stodgy earnestness, is a revelation of the soul of a people. A slow, inartistic people (they themselves say "unimaginative"), impervious to the powers of eloquence, but to be moved profoundly by conviction and feeling—above all a people with a strong sense of duty, who have made conscience the essence of their poetry and religion, and thus, although reacting chiefly to the facts of experience and reality—not forgetting that reality, the soul—are capable of a world of dreamy mysticism. By

appealing to conscience, by stimulating its slow meditation on right and wrong, by means of a silent working of the mind, all English reforms have been accomplished. Thus in the sixteenth century came Reformation, in the eighteenth Abolition of Slavery, in the nineteenth Catholic Emancipation, extension of the Franchise, Abolition of the Rotten Boroughs; and, as the result of the feeling of remorse and "social compunction" roused by Carlyle and Ruskin, that compulsory legislation for the benefit of Labour in which England gave the lead to Europe. Thus, too, for the last twelve or fifteen years, has Socialism itself, in England always closely allied with the dreams of religion and puritanism, been making progress. Very similar—and this is the nearest example—was the origin and development of those agitations for moral reform which have attracted men of good will in tens and hundreds of thousands, such bands of crusaders as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Bands of Hope, the Salvation Army and, above all, the great Temperance Leagues. The methods of persuasion, the motives, the mental operations which induce a young Englishman to enlist for the duration of the present war, are precisely of the same kind as those by which he is brought to sign a temperance pledge. It is ingrained in him that such an act ought only to be spontaneous, since the individual belongs to himself alone and has the sole right to choose in life the right or wrong which will determine his everlasting destiny.

So we have on one side the good constantly aspiring towards the better; on the other, the lukewarm, indifferent and cowardly, on whom the others look askance. This is so true that one of the arguments used against Conscription is that volunteers would decline to serve by the side of men who had to be compelled.[1]

But if the question which is being put to so many consciences is simple, the answer is not always easy. To defend one's country, to take up arms against an enemy who is the Devil Incarnate, is no doubt a duty, but does it take precedence over all other duties?[2] Take a man with children or parents dependent on him who has slowly risen to his post in some bank or office. The war, according to Lord Kitchener, may last three years. Ought he to go and give up his place, which cannot be kept empty, and which another man, less conscientious than himself, will occupy? Or, again, take a manufacturer, whose firm, if he enlists, will go under, to

[1] These pages had been written for several weeks when I received (January 10, 1916) from an English volunteer, who enlisted at the age of forty, a letter in which this feeling is expressed: "All reductions made, the law of Conscription will give us half a million beastly conscripts. I hope they will get sat on hard during their training. I only wish I were one of their officers. But I wouldn't like to go into the trenches with them. I hope we shall get a good nickname for them. You know what the Territorials, those who refuse to go on foreign service, are called: 'The Royal Standbacks.'"

[2] "I don't come here to say: 'Go and join' to a man who may have a sick mother. . . . I say honestly that my wife is more to me than my country, but not when my country is in danger."—*Speech of Mr. Seymour Hicks at a recruiting meeting in London, October* 8.

the advantage of rivals not so scrupulous of duty; or an engineer in a firm which is indirectly aiding in the production of war material; or a farmer who says to himself that England cannot do without forage, wheat and cattle. These are no easy questions to settle for oneself. I myself became cognisant of a rather pathetic case of this kind: A young man, twenty-three years old, had succeeded, through the death of his father, to a farm of twelve hundred acres, on which half a village —fifteen or twenty labourers—found employment. He was anxious to enlist; but his mother insisted on his remaining, for if he went it seemed to her that the whole work of the farm must stop. In the country, where the village labourer has been for centuries so inferior and so dependent, the presence of a master on the farm seems indispensable. To doubt in such a case would seem astonishing to a Frenchman, since from his birth up, for the last forty years, his duty has been made plain to him by a universal and all-embracing law. But we cannot wonder that an Englishman should be perplexed, suddenly finding himself faced with the necessity of answering, at once and alone, such a question, especially when he sees other Englishmen deciding in the negative.[1]

[1] That is why, in a letter addressed individually to every Englishman (October 15, 1915), Lord Derby, Director General of Recruiting, gave as a criterion the following: "Sir,—May I beg you to ask yourself this question: Have I done *everything* that I could to defend the safety of my country?" and in a letter addressed to the Mayor of Leicester, and published by the whole Press, he added this second question: "Would the excuse which I am making be valid in a country possessing Conscription?"

Instinctively he looks for a precedent: If the duty is undeniable, why is it so new? Why is it not set forth in the Bible, or by law? Learning of the presence of a Frenchman, this young man came to see me (every Frenchman was then readily believed, in England, to be a specialist in war matters): he wanted to know whether service was really compulsory for every man in France; how much was left of the German Army in the tenth month of the war; and, above all, whether the English forces then in France were sufficient. I had been told that he wanted to ask my advice. He took good care not to; but I saw clearly that he was trying to feel his way to a decision. Later on, from a lady in the neighbourhood, I heard of his mother's opposition, and that after a month he had joined the army.

Such an act, like a religious conversion, is the final outcome of a deep working of the mind.[1] The whole process resembles in its methods and phenomena those of the Methodist revivals;[2] the converted become converters, and proselytes spring up all at once from the opposing

[1] The *Daily Chronicle* published (October 9) a fine poem by Mr. Harold Begbie, urging men to do their duty. Here is the first stanza—

> "Fight it out in your heart, my lad,
> It's time for the final wrench;
> Home has its arms about your neck,
> But conscience points to the trench."

[2] The methods of Lord Derby were so exactly like those of a religious revival that the phrase became current, *the Lord Derby Revival* or *the recruiting revival*.

ranks. For the matter does not end with the circulation of impersonal pamphlets and posters: officers and men turn themselves into recruiting agents; disabled soldiers go and speak at meetings; women, devoted propagandists of the idea which is robbing them of their sons and husbands, whip up their canvassing proclivities, and go out lecturing or stir up in their homes the indifferent and hesitating. In the country, where the moral authority of the gentry is enlisted in service of the cause, the ladies of the manor house head the movement. In the manufacturing districts leaders of the Labour Party, such as Will Crooks, Ben Tillett and Hodge, and representatives of the trade unions who have been taken to the front by the military authorities, set to work to convince the men of their class in English fashion by anecdotes, facts, and illustrations taken from their own actual experience. To the workmen they speak, above all, of the need of munitions, and it is especially to the sense of justice, so strong in this nation, that they appeal. "Is it fair" that able-bodied Britons should remain at home whilst their brothers spend their nights in the trenches, risking defeat and death? Is it fair that bachelors should avoid the danger which married men have gone to face? Is it fair, they kept on saying in June, after the deficiencies of the artillery had been revealed, that their comrades should be left to die under avalanches of shells because English workmen are on strike, or refuse to alter the union rules which restrict the speed of production? One bill

especially laid bare the injustice of this contrast. In the top half of the poster artillerymen under the bursting shells of the enemy stand powerless or lie dying on their guns; the open ammunition wagons are empty. Beneath is another picture: workmen in caps smoking their pipes, with their arms crossed, in front of a public-house. In the distance is the gate of a factory—closed.

To appeal to the eye, to incite to action by pictures, to multiply the pictures indefinitely, and by their ever-present suggestion to create automatic mental habits, general currents of unconscious imitation, what else is this but the very principle and method of advertising? And the most singular thing about this propaganda is that in spirit it is puritan, but in method commercial; the blending of these two characteristics is one of the most original features of the modern English mind (one might even say, taking America into consideration, of the Anglo-Saxon mind). It dates from the close of the eighteenth century, when modern mechanical industry began together with the evangelical and Methodist revival. For the last hundred and fifty years the special activities of "business," absorbing as they do the vast majority of the men from early youth, have helped as much as political institutions and a strict, individualistic religion to mould the soul and intellect of this people. They are a nation not of State servants, not of soldiers, but of free business men. For the essence of business is liberty—liberty of

prices, of supply and demand, of competition in all its forms. It is the influence of commerce which quickly developed amongst the English one of their most characteristic ideas—the principle of *laisser-faire*. Favoured by the ancient instincts of personal independence, strengthened by habits of self-government and by the puritan ethics which isolate the individual and throw him upon himself, this principle has spread from the purely economic sphere in which the Manchester school, with its tendency to Nonconformity, was its representative, to the whole community: Bible and Free Competition—this formula sums up nineteenth-century England. It followed naturally the English instinctive idea that, at all events in the social sphere, things tend spontaneously to find their equilibrium, shape and perfect development; that they are alive, and only need to be allowed to live;—and, indeed, in the sphere of ethics this same conception is expressed in the injunction, *live and let live*. Thus arose, without supervision or direction from any powerful, long-sighted and paternal State, in complete contrast to the German process, the wealth, greatness and power of England. This principle, no doubt, is corrected to-day by new and growing socialistic ideals, but it still has power over the mind, and governs old habits. It is a very important factor in the peculiar method of foreign policy which Mr. Asquith summed up in the formula, "Wait and see"; it also accounts a good deal for the vague notion which only yesterday, and at the most

critical period of the war, was very widely prevalent, that success was possible without a universal effort, without any systematic plan controlled by the authorities, and that once more everything would come all right. It is largely responsible, therefore, for the delay of the country in organising itself industrially for the war; but more for the resistance still opposed to the apostles of conscription, a resistance which perhaps is not to be overcome. For the idea which creates that opposition is seen to be, as the necessity for conscription becomes more pressing, more and more deeply ingrained in the English mind and bound up with the very principles of English society.

But every vital organism adapts itself in some way or other to its environment, turning to unforeseen uses those very organs and instincts which seemed more particularly to expose it to danger; and so these commercial habits, so opposed to the idea of militarism, have given birth to the ingenious expedient which has served more than anything else to create so quickly an army on the continental scale. Through this same general law of adjustment, a society in which no public action can be undertaken except if public opinion requires it has found methods to organise and accelerate the development of that opinion. The chief of these methods is simply to advertise, and to use the most modern kind of advertisement—incessant, omnipresent—with all its ingenuity in giving infinite variety to its appeals, with the original and strong colouring and

the humour which in England often makes it so picturesque. Its application to politics was already familiar: brass bands, big drums, blue and orange ribbons, songs, flower-decked carriages, processions, sky signs and cinema films of the polling days. It had also been applied to religion: tambourines and trombones, of the Methodist revivals and the Salvation Army. Now it was pressed into the service of patriotism: fifes and drums, through the streets of the main traffic where the new recruits are marched, followed by such as gape at the arrival of a circus troupe; parades in the open squares, to the music of bands, whilst recruiting officers harangue the people from their motor-cars; flags, flowers, gaudy pictures of the attesting offices resembling, in their gay and startling effects, and the vulgar joviality of their appeal, the methods of the cheap-jack. The advertising campaign is almost American in its style. True that when Lord Kitchener demanded three hundred thousand new volunteers, his call to the country appeared on every wall in all its fine simplicity — the English soul is sensitive to a purely moral beauty of this kind. But that was not enough. The crowd — which in this country is simple and unsophisticated—must be impressed with the direct, physical sensation of urgency. On the front screen of every taxi in London appeared all at once, in big letters, this announcement: "300,000 more men wanted *at once*." As they were seen rushing in every direction with this poster, the illusion was produced that they were

driving at that pace to carry the urgent news quicker to every quarter of the town—nay, that there and then they were engaged in seeking the three hundred thousand volunteers. To stir up the public into thinking that the purchase of a certain article cannot be put off, and must be effected that very minute, to drive the onlooker to act upon the suggested idea whilst it is still quite fresh, is one of the new devices in advertising which the American masters of that art have taught the English. *To-day!* enlist *to-day!* Send your man *to-day!* seems to sound from every wall; and on the man in the street, whose average and rather plastic mind is easily impressed, these loud, short, clear injunctions act with great suggestive force. Another means, which also comes from the United States, where the hypnotisation of the public has been developed into a fine art, is to put on, when addressing it, a tone of conviction, a sort of jovial vitality, which allures as well as commands. Any one who has heard young clergymen and dissenting ministers preaching, or attended meetings of Salvationists, Temperance Societies, and the Y.M.C.A., knows how skilfully the missionaries of religion and morality, once so severe and gloomy in their bearing, avail themselves to-day of these effective devices. They are now used for the great conversion campaign which is to induce the young men of England to enter on a new path in life. Inspiring pictures of fine khaki soldiers, looking straight into your face with

such clear eyes of health! They have found faith and salvation. Do they not seem to possess the secret of happiness, and to promise it to others? How they seem to call the man in the street—the dull and slow civilian—to share in the freedom from care, the lightness of their hearts which comes from duty nobly done! "Put on the king's uniform! Join us, boys!" they seem to shout, gaily beckoning us as we pass. It is enough to recall the little coloured bill which showed three young Highlanders arm in arm, striding buoyantly along, as if about to dance a fling. What joy of life in the smooth faces of these lads of twenty, with their clean and radiant smile! They were the flower of a nation, a flower not yet full-blown, pathetic, offering itself, innumerable, in all its brilliance, grace and joy to the blind scythe of war. And that print was only meant to attract, to allure. Others of less beauty, some of which were criticised as vulgar, were to me no less touching: they seemed to appeal to that English spirit of courage and reticence which seeks to hide emotion beneath humour, and prefers a joke to a fine saying. There was a bill, for instance, representing a group of horses galloping along the race-course, with jockeys dressed in the colours of the belligerent powers. The short motto read: "*Sign on for the Grand International Final!*"

Strange words, these, at a moment when this country—so proud a country, the heir of such a

splendid past, conscious always of that for which she stands on this planet and in human history—is mortally threatened by the bitterest, the most insolent, and the strongest foe she has ever known. The foreigner is inclined to smile if he does not know England well, and the style of these appeals is disliked by many travelled Englishmen who think they see the impression made abroad. But under all this, he who knows perceives the bed-rock character of the nation which this crisis, by the very intensity of the collective and necessary effort, is revealing more clearly than ever before. That character is a combination of will and conscience: the inviolable will of the individual who has sole control of himself; the conscience which meditates in silence, stirs to action, and ordains the sacrifice. For, make no mistake about it, whatever the style of the propaganda (and as I have said: of the advertisements), the man who, resolving to "fight for his king," comes to a recruiting office to utter and sign that old religious form: "I swear before Almighty God to serve in all allegiance, honestly and faithfully, as in duty bound, his Majesty George V, his heirs and successors, and to defend them in their person, their Crown and their dignity against all enemies, in obedience to the generals and officers placed over me—and so help me God!"—that man knows what risks he faces; he has read the story of Mons and of Le Cateaux, of the Yser and of Ypres, of Neuve Chapelle and of La Bassée; knows about the avalanches of shrapnel and of *Jack Johnsons*,

the liquid flames and the poison gas; knows the number and proportion of the slain; knows of friends who will never return. Three millions of young Englishmen chose to accept this risk, together with military discipline and servitude, and one by one they came to take the solemn pledge because, without any intrusion upon their free will, appeal had been made to their conscience.

Such an act of a people is unexampled in history, and when perceived in its whole reality, when "*realised*," as the English say, we feel that it partakes of the sublime. For me, the impression of it all is bound up with the memory of an incident which symbolically condensed into one small picture a moral act of tremendous significance and magnitude. It was Sunday: we had just been visiting a training camp in the north of London; with us there got into the train a young girl and an old man, who through the window took a prolonged farewell of a soldier from the camp—and then, silent and motionless, sat down in front of us. The man had the long, narrow face and beard, the black and threadbare frock-coat of a dissenting minister of the old school. The girl, also, was clad in pure black; her pale, thin face had the intense fixed expression, the compressed lips which we usually associate with puritanism. Those lips seemed never to have opened in a smile; she was wearing round her neck, on the common woollen material of her blouse, a strange, gilt, heraldic ornament, a sort of brooch, of unusual width, which all at once I recognised as one of

those regimental badges worn on officers' caps. Then I understood: she was in mourning; and this badge was a relic, worn with proud piety, no doubt in memory of a brother. The train was already in motion, and both remained sitting very upright without word or movement. Then the lips of the young girl opened, and addressing the old man, she spoke a few words which I should, probably, have failed to catch if I hadn't been watching her mouth: "*We've given our four. Conscription may come; we can't do more.*"

October 1915.

THE MEN

THUS were raised those new legions of England, whose ever-increasing numbers, and—we can now say, too—whose technical efficiency, are for the enemy one of the most deadly surprises of the war. He thought he had foreseen every material contingency: the appearance of such an army is one of the largest and most decisive of contingencies. But then it had its origin in spiritual realities, and the methodical enemy has shown himself hopelessly blind to all that comes within that category.

That spiritual reality, of which he ought to have taken note, was simply—the English mind. We have seen it with all its special characteristics in the methods employed to create the armies. The armies themselves, in their appearance, their spirit, their manners, their organisation, reveal it by evidence still more direct. All that is best and deepest in England, all that is most profoundly national in the soul of this people is seen to demonstration in the ranks of these armies.

The old regular army was recruited from the lower castes—such a word may be used in reference to a country in which class distinctions have remained so sharp. Men enlisted in the street—

often at the tavern door—had been passed over by the really civilising influences in England; and their peculiar environment during seven years in barracks developed in them a special professional type. But in the new troops the type is truly English. For they spring from the very heart of the country; they are formed from its noblest and most active substance; and not so merely because these soldiers are volunteers whose hearts the thought of their country has stirred, but because they almost all belong to those classes in which the national ideals and traditions are kept up—either to the flower of the working class steeped in English Protestantism (in the early days of the war too many skilled artisans left foundry and forge for the regiment), or to the middle classes, the professional classes and the landed gentry. The influence of these last was especially strong in forming the spirit and characteristics of the New Armies. They gave the tone because they set the example, and we know what their prestige still is. At all times they, more than any others, have been the England, which they have ruled, and for which they stood in the eyes of foreigners; before all they were the incarnation of the English ideas, taught in undiluted rigour, along with the educative games in their public schools and universities. English discipline, English religion, English traditions, together with the incessant suggestions of English social life, have fixed their type—a type of body and mind, clearly outlined as a medal struck from a die, which the foreigner recognises at a glance beneath all its individual varieties. Fine,

well-built lads ("true to type," as the English say), simple-minded and healthy, brought up to fresh air, hardened by their games, able to endure fatigue and bear up against suffering, and yet (or so it seems to a foreigner), rather particular about bodily comforts, because certain conditions of life seem to them—and still more to all those who unconsciously take them as models—to form part of what they owe to themselves, to be their due. They are willing to go and be shot like gentlemen; and like gentlemen they insist on shaving every morning.

Psychologically their type is clearly marked. By nature they are slow: their worth lies chiefly in the grip of their will, their steady nerves, in the deep seriousness which is hidden beneath their good temper and their humour, and in the quality of a self-restraint imposed by conscience. Their education, their schooling at all its stages, has strengthened this natural tendency and disposition. It has been much more a moral than an intellectual training, for to be a gentleman as each is, or wishes to be,[1] is in the first place a matter of spirit and conscience. Three hundred years of strict, biblical Protestantism have inseparably linked the idea of duty with the superhuman authority which is expressed by the word *God*—a word they do not lightly utter, because the old Commandment has been taken literally, and the

[1] "Every man in England is a gentleman," said Mr. Seymour Hicks to the crowd in a recruiting speech (October 8, 1915).

solemn emotions which it awakens belong to the innermost and most guarded part of a man's soul. To keep one's self to oneself, never to utter one's deepest and most serious feelings, is a characteristic of the English soul; but some letters have been published, written by wounded men to their beloved, some poems have been left behind by the dead (Julian Grenfell, Rupert Brooke, Charles Sorley), which are enough to show—if, indeed, all the poetry of this nation, from Milton to Kipling, had not already made it clear—to what lyrical heights the silent idea of duty and sacrifice can exalt their souls. As a rule, such utterance comes only when the man is alone with God or in the face of death.[1] In society he is trained to show nothing but that social nature which is superimposed on his personal and genuine nature in order to repress it. He is governed by the rules of the social code, the first of which is to conform as closely as possible to the general type: curious rules, vigorously enforced from school days, forbidding the gestures of emotion—of nature itself—and all expressions of originality. This is the sort of discipline that has given him what contemporary English moralists have somewhat unjustly

[1] Or else in the uttermost intimacies. Here is an extract from a letter written by a young man to his betrothed: "You will hear nothing from me for a week or a fortnight, perhaps longer. Don't worry. Look on me as I look on myself: as an abstraction, a part of the Great Soul struggling for salvation, its own and that of the world. I am no longer a person with private joys and sorrows. Nor are you either" (*Graphic*, October 30, 1915). See Appendix A.

called "English insincerity." By it he is made to fit into that social convention in which every Englishman has his being, and which forbids him to give himself away—ever to reveal the deepest and most passionate movements of his inner self, forbids him in short to "gush"; and further forbids him to uncover and gaze on certain aspects and regions of reality, especially the seamy side of life and of society (the ugliness, hypocrisy, dirt and vice, the skulls and crossbones, darkness and depths that lie beneath the face of things), and, if perchance he has looked on them, forbids him to tell what he has seen. For the convention which supposes that everything is healthy, well-ordered, and has its moral root and sufficient cause of being in an underlying mystery which shall not be probed—that convention is supposed to be needful to the health, the order and the happiness of individuals and of the community. By thus eliminating every recognition of tragic elements, this social discipline tends more and more to make life appear a game, a game which must be played with humour and detachment; and the excessive devotion to sport acts in the same direction. The underlying principle of these rules is a certain instinctive horror of nervous disease and lack of social balance, of morbidity; but they have drawbacks which the new English critics of England had been denouncing and satirising for ten years before the war. Of these not the least is that such rules impose on men, in their social relations, an optimistic convention,

make them always say verbally—and in the long run believe mentally—that the less is the greater; and end, in the majority of cases, by blinding them completely to the necessities and dangers of reality, and so prevent them from adapting themselves to meet these dangers. There can be no doubt that the set intention of maintaining an unperturbed appearance—one might almost say of shutting one's eyes to danger—had much to do with the slowness of the English in facing first the threat, and then the reality, of the war. But once the peril makes itself clearly seen, once it rises insistent and imminent in deadly shape, the secret element of stoicism hidden beneath this inculcated optimism reveals itself. For if one probes to the core of this English code, one finds there always a moral force, a determination to resist whatever misfortune may come along—a "no" opposed to all enfeebling and disintegrating emotion. How many families has not the war cast into mourning? They are expected to be silent, one might say, to hide their grief. Grief belongs to privacy: there let it stay! In society the social side of man should alone be seen, with the smile and the manners of society. This rule counts for much in that appearance of tranquillity, of indifference to the war, of "life as usual" which, but yesterday, England presented to a foreign eye; it goes far, too, in accounting for that seeming carelessness—one might even say frivolity ("ils ne sont pas sérieux")—at which some of us, who had seen the English at the front, sometimes

wondered. They could die in the most heroic manner, but would rather go through the retaking of a trench than give up their five o'clock tea; whilst behind the lines they went on playing football. On the whole, they seemed to regard the war much as a football match and looked more like sportsmen than soldiers.[1]

Such, indeed, they are, and must be. The same creed which leaves the Englishman entirely to himself, to his conscience and his religion when it's a question of accepting suffering or death, forces him, in the presence of others, to use terms and manners which are almost those of sport. We have already pointed out that some of the ideas associated with this word to-day by the English are entirely moral. It is significant that the phrase, "play the game," is tending more and more to replace the old expression, "do your duty"—and for the reason that in daily life all over-serious words and attitudes are avoided. *Play the game*—so the word goes; play it strictly, according to the rules, all together, carefully making yourself as much like the others as possible (for, by a curious yet quite comprehensible paradox, the most individualistic of nations is, at the same time, the most gregarious), working patiently, honourably for your team, showing up as little as you can yourself, keeping your mouth shut if you get a kick, smiling if your eye

[1] The English papers related that at the Battle of Loos (September 1915) a Highlander was seen charging the enemy, kicking a football in front of him.

is blacked (the first rule of boxing), preserving, in a crisis, a humorous and conversational tone, and never seeming to take yourself seriously. "Sign on for the Grand International Final!" said the bill; it only spoke the language that they all speak, the invariable language of convention, which so many English writers have attacked, just because it is so artificial, because it lowers every touching reality, every profound and fine impulse of the soul to the level of the commonplace and the jocular. Many must have pondered long before going to take the oath and sign on at the recruiting office. But once the pledge is taken, you would think they had just entered for athletic sports, or booked their tickets for a somewhat lengthy shooting expedition in South Africa. "Having chosen to do their bit," says Kipling, "they do it without talking any more about their motives than they would talk about their religion or their love affairs. Of endurance, of self-sacrifice, of absolute devotion, of the sentiments and virtues from which this marvellous world is born and which keep it in being, there is never any discussion. In the camp, all this is taken for granted; otherwise there would be no camp."[1] It is patriotism which has created the army; but once in the army, patriotism must no longer express itself. One of the drawings of *Punch*, in which the prevailing types and manners of the moment are so vividly revealed, shows a sergeant drilling recruits still in civil garb. In the button-

[1] *An Army in Training.*

hole of his jacket, one of the volunteers is wearing a little Union Jack: "Take that gew-gaw out! You're a soldier now. We want no damned patriotism in the army!" Their favourite songs, at the front, are very significant. This winter, in the trenches of Flanders with the water up to their waists, under a ceaseless grey rain, they were singing the ballad "Somewhere the sun is shining." At the beginning of the war "Tipperary" was all the rage. They like the "Marseillaise" for its "go" and because they want to show loyalty to the Alliance, just as the French flag is flown in London. But the fire of the words they do not feel. As one of their fellow-countrymen, who has long observed them during the course of this war, says, it would be impossible for them to sing an English equivalent to *Deutschland über Alles:* if they were to set about celebrating in chorus the glory of their country "they would think they were play-acting," and still less could they intone Hymns of Hate. The National Anthem is a prayer for the king, a hymn sung with bared head and all the devotion of religion. As to the dangers and horrors of the war itself, the nearer they are to the firing line, the more direct, personal, and terrible their experiences, the stricter seems to be their reticence. At the rear they talk pretty freely of what they see and hear—of the wounded, of the effects of gas and shells, of the reported atrocities of the "Huns"; but in the firing line, they smoke their pipes, and content themselves with writing home: "I

hope this card will find you well, as it leaves me." [1]

One rule of the game is respect for their opponent, and, in case of defeat, absence of ill-feeling. At the beginning, in spite of their first experience in Belgium, and of their frightful losses at Mons and Le Cateau, they tried conscientiously to practise it. A Highlander, in a letter quoted by John Buchan, relates what he has heard of the slaughters in Belgium, and then—scrupulous Calvinist—draws a distinction: "I must say that those before our lines do nothing of the sort. They fight quite clean." And then he adds the most extreme word of praise which is to be found in the old, puritanical, shop-keeping vocabulary: "They are highly *respectable* people." As late as last Christmas, these good sportsmen shook hands with their enemies. But things changed. They found out that their enemies were not "playing the game," therefore that they were no longer foes with whom, after victory or defeat, one could live on honourable terms, but vermin which it was absolutely necessary to exterminate in order that the world might remain habitable. Before the foul blows of the Germans, who "hit below the belt," there was nothing for it but to keep silence, clench your teeth, and "stick it."

Many of them have Bibles, and the regiment has its chaplain. On Sundays, on the eve of a dangerous assault, the "Padre," in a white surplice thrown over his khaki, holds a service.

[1] John Buchan, *History of the War*, vol. v. p. 37.

They solemnly held such a service at Compiègne, when, after a week of exhausting retreat, they received the order to attack. Those grave psalms and prayers recited aloud in unison bring near to them once more the atmosphere of their village churches, only to be called up by those old words and sounds so utterly English. By the magic of this worship, in which all actively participate, the vague, deep ideas of duty and religion, of England and her history, are blended for them into a single emotion.

They still have faith in their caste distinctions. These soldiers, especially those of the lower class, will have none but real gentlemen to lead them. After the immense slaughter of officers of the regular army, when it was necessary to provide leaders for the unforeseen and ever-increasing numbers of new troops, how many lads of eighteen and twenty (and what a boy an Englishman is at that age!) were appointed ensigns, because they were "well born" and of fine physique, because they had—oh, memories of Waterloo!—played on the playing-fields of Eton or Rugby, and been captains of cricket teams!—and how many have been taken by the Moloch!

They are not intellectual; knowledge and ideas have never formed part of this nation's ideal. In England, as one of Stendhal's characters says, intellect loses twenty-five per cent. of its value, and an intelligent man is known only as a "clever man." A writer in the *Fortnightly* remarked the other day that England is the only country in Europe where a mother could, unconcernedly, say

of her son: "My Charlie has never been very brainy." In just such a tone a candidate for Sandhurst told me one day: "I'm not good at exams, you know"—that tone would have been very different if it had been a question of inefficiency at cricket. An honours degree man, a distinguished Greek scholar of Cambridge, declared to me: "I never read." In this country which has produced spontaneously, without intensive culture, some of the greatest scientific men, philosophers, novelists, and beyond all question the greatest poets of the world; in this country, the civilisation of which is so original and so deeply ingrained, intellect has never been an end in itself: it remains an organ for the service of life, warns the individual of the difficulties he may meet, and enables him to adapt himself to them from day to day. These English soldiers are by nature just as ready to turn their hands to anything as ours are; and their improvised officers quickly learn their special duties by practice, in the true English method. Finally, this army of volunteers, in which nobody wears spectacles or has any theories about his race and his culture, is already proving itself, man for man, superior to the methodically and mechanically trained enemy. They are just honest, handsome English lads, whose only aim is to behave well, to obey their orders, to shoot straight, to bear smilingly, or silently, every strain and every fatigue, and then, if possible, to get a bath and a square meal like "respectable" men. In London and in

the suburban camps, I watched them drilling in civilian costume, and in their shirt sleeves—patiently, with true "good will to the work," and a silent determination to make the best use of their training, and learn as quickly as possible all that was necessary to make them efficient professional soldiers! The fair, strong, regular stamp of England was on them all; the unity of type plainly visible; they embodied the peculiarly English ideas, those which are spread and maintained by education and environment, and shape the human material from generation to generation. Honest, steady lads, the healthiest and most conscientious of their country, serious minded, under their simple and smiling exterior: truly the human flower of England. Decent fellows, fine physique: "will give a good account of themselves," said their fellow-countrymen, whose faith in these qualities may well be a dangerous delusion: the powers of matter and machinery are easily forgotten; an enemy, morally and physically inferior, may win the day if he is better armed. But the English have always tended to regard war as a development of their ancestral sport, the "noble art of boxing"—a friendly struggle in which each opponent uses but his fists, and strikes but the regulation blows, so that the best trained, the most vigorous, the most patient—in a word, the "best man"—is sure to win. "Murder by machinery," they called the early battles, in presence of the new destructive devices of the enemy. But they have learnt their

lesson now and adapted themselves to the facts. To-day all industrial England is manufacturing man-slaying machines. All industrial England: what this means will become more and more apparent as time goes on.

One last feature of this army completes its revelation of the national soul, a soul as original as it is old. I no longer refer to the human material, but to its classification, to the peculiar structure evolved. One would have thought that, to classify these improvised legions, too numerous for any existing organisation, and without connection with the past, numbers, simplest and clearest method of all, freest from relics and complications of the past, would at once have been selected: Why not number them? But such an arrangement was too abstract and logical for the English mind, which seems always to prefer the irrational processes of vital evolution. The past is the initial condition of evolution: everything living springs from the past, and is developed out of previous forms. At Lord Kitchener's call armies sprang from the void —a new creation. And so it was held necessary to instil into them the virtue belonging to old things which a long course of evolution has developed; they were straightway affiliated to the old British regiments, each with its name, its badge, its mascot, its peculiar features and traditions, its local patriotism, its personal and plainly recognisable soul, to the old regiments of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, on whose

colours are inscribed the name of Ramillies and Waterloo: *Buffs*, *Gordon Highlanders*, *Scots Greys*, *Irish Fusiliers*, *Grenadier Guards*, *King's* or *Queen's Own*—or again, that *Honourable Artillery Company* founded by Henry VIII, and originally armed with the arquebuse, whose chief pride is to draw all its privates from the ranks of the well born, and half of whose numbers—strange phenomenon for an artillery corps—are pure infantry. These regiments have such genuine individuality that one of the recruiting problems was to satisfy those many youths who wished only to enlist in particular corps; to respect these preferences, as an inevitable feature of the voluntary and religious act of enlistment was deemed inevitable. In general, they managed this successfully by a device which proves once more the complete indifference of the English to logical symmetry; they simply multiplied the battalions of a regiment according to its popularity; to-day, like a hive that produces fresh swarms, a single regiment may count fifteen thousand men under its flag, whilst another may have but eight hundred. Add to all these queer complications all sorts of fanciful names, of generally ancient, but now and again modern origin, none giving any useful information to the enemy: Sherwood Foresters, Warwick Yeomanry, Artist Fusiliers, Public School Regiment, Business Men's Corps (in the latter instances the similarity of origin at once gave distinct spiritual entity to these new regiments), and you may imagine the initial

contempt of the Germans, and their final complete bewilderment in the presence of a nomenclature so devoid of technical and mathematical qualities.[1]

Such are the characteristics of this most original army, which, from the start, and because this is a need of the English mind, has succeeded in linking itself on to all the precedents, to all the ancient military traditions of the country, and in clothing itself with their prestige. This army is the purest embodiment of the national life that has ever sprung from the depths of England. In it the whole essence of the nation is plainly visible: its habits and mental processes, its religion, ethics and ideals, its social code, conventions, prejudices, all its virtues and moral energies. Feeling as if I were witnessing something entirely spiritual and almost mystic, I watched in London, near the Guildhall or at Westminster, the incessant process which, for the last fifteen months, has been drawing and distilling from the shapeless mass of the English nation its veritable essence. Perched on his taxi, a recruiting officer would be speaking; from time to time, a man would leave the crowd and go to join a row of others in caps and bowlers—the recruits, the newly converted,

[1] Add to this that the same regiment includes battalions of Regulars, of Special Reserve (distinct, these, from the National Reserve), of Kitchener's Army, of the Territorials, or Volunteers, who are by no means the same as the newly enrolled volunteers. The Corps of Artist Fusiliers is a training school for officers. Few Englishmen can see their way through the tangle. "But it works!"

surrounded by a squad of stiff, upright soldiers in khaki. The national conscience and *will to life* of the country had just been awakened in these men of the street; of his own accord each took his place, in a new and definite order, for the furtherance of that one end to which all the forces of this country tend evermore to converge—victory. On one almost imperceptible spot, one could see growing out of the nation, the army, the bright steel, which was sharpening blade and point, before one's very eyes. The fifes and drums would sound, and with one movement, short and sharp, the soldiers shouldered arms, and off would march the squad — the men in common dress surrounded by the men in uniform, the new recruits keeping step already to the strong beat of the old English military tune.

Such a movement, whose extent and duration have already exceeded all anticipations, must reach its limit at last. One million, two million, and yesterday we were told three million, volunteers have offered themselves—more than half the number that compulsory service could have given, and never has England done anything that so clearly revealed her inner virtue. But the conscience of a people is like its other characteristics, which are expressions of an average, or more exactly of a dominant note, marking only the frequent presence of certain types or qualities. Though in these millions of young men the English conscience has spoken, in many others of the same class it remains

dumb or helpless[1]; in hundreds of thousands, perhaps, it will never speak. The more the numbers of the conscientious approach exhaustion, the more clearly the unconscientious stand out, and they are apparently not to be converted. Thus the flaw of the system appears in a new and startling light. The system, a natural one, because of its historic and not theoretic origin, is based on the old English principle: "liberty of the subject." Between this liberty and the growing vital necessity of organising and utilising for the war all the human energies of the country, the opposition becomes every day more plainly manifest. And here is a second still more startling contradiction: such liberty—in this case the liberty of the cowardly and the selfish to refuse themselves, whilst the best are dying for England, and, incidentally, for them—is evidently inconsistent with the dictates of that other principle, "justice," which has a no less powerful hold on the English mind, and is, moreover, to-day supported by all the new socialistic ideas which, in this democracy, as in ours, aim much less at the freedom of the individual than at the equality of all. For one or the other of these two principles the British grouped themselves into two camps, according as they desired conscription or not, and this conflict, impassioned as are all those in which rival principles attack each other, tends more and more to take the place

[1] It was calculated by the recruiting authorities, at the beginning of November 1915, that 1,250,000 men of military age had not offered themselves. This number did not include the railway servants, or those engaged on munitions of war (*Morning Post*, November 4, 1915).

of the old party divisions. One fact may seem strange: The Conservatives, champions hitherto of individual liberty, now crowd into the camp where the modern idea of justice is worshipped; whilst the Socialists, democratic apostles of equality, pass over into that where the old English idea of liberty is still upheld. Once again logic fails, but this time the reasons for the failure are not specially English: they are merely human.

October 1915.[1]

[1] See Appendix B.

THE NEED OF ADAPTATION

I

ONE of the chief German fallacies, repeated in every war pamphlet in order to justify the Germanic lust for conquest, is that the right of a people to its territory is measured by its force of life and its will to life—*Lebenskraft, Lebenswille*—of which the true criterion is its military power. When this power is lacking, an empire is but an empty shell, a shape once developed by life, but from which life has departed, and which will crumble into dust as soon as it is touched with the sword. Thus, "war is the great test of the nations"; "it reveals the lie and enthrones truth in its place." [1]

[1] *Das Sittliche Recht des Krieges*, in *Internationale Monatschrift*, October 1914, by R. Seeberg, Professor of Theology, University of Berlin. See my articles on "Germany and the War," *Revue de Paris*, March 15, April 15 and May 15, 1915, and especially the first, in which these theories are examined. It is because the German attributes a moral and mystic sense to might, because he regards it as the external sign of nobility and right, that all the English proposals for disarmament were received with sarcastic anger as impertinences. Germany was invited to reduce herself to the condition of those states which Treitschke calls emasculated (*verstümmelt*), because devoid of strength. With regard to the unexpected anger stirred up by the ingenuous advances of England, see Mr. Austin Harrison's book, *England and Germany* (Chap. III), published in 1907, on the morrow of the Algeciras Conference, and foreshadowing the whole situation.

The sophistry in this thesis—a variant, or a corollary, of the theory which asserts that might is right—becomes manifest when the Germans apply it to England, that old country whose breed of men has remained so young. They might just as well apply it to that other country, whose growth has far outstripped every known precedent and is still going on—the United States. In England, as in America, if the military organisation is weak, it is not because there is any lack of vitality—vitality overflows in an infinite range of activities—it is simply that these nations have not developed on military lines. The German thesis is that which any carnivorous animal might maintain against any peaceful creature, perhaps of nobler and sometimes of richer life than its own, but which it can make its prey, because the latter, long used and adapted to conditions of safety, lacks defensive organs, or at least those special organs necessary for the conflict forced upon it. The fangs of the wolf are no sign of superior vitality, and the Wolf of the tale did not talk of the moral virtue and mystic meaning of his fangs.

Against the military machine which Germany had so carefully constructed, and which was meant to conquer all the coast facing Folkestone, Dover and the Thames, England was, at the beginning of the war, almost defenceless. Through vital and long-standing necessity, in order to secure the sea routes by which her food is brought, she created of old, and has supported and perfected with traditional persistency, her naval

instrument of war. For a conflict on land, against a great continental power, she had prepared nothing efficient. When war broke out she could *theoretically* mobilise 400,000 men, including the Special Reserve and the Territorials, a sort of voluntary militia, more or less trained by short periods of drill, but which had never seen actual service. In fact, she could dispose at most of 250,000 soldiers.[1] And we must not forget that, to help France in case of aggression—if she did help her, for she had pledged herself to nothing—she had never spoken of throwing more than 160,000 men into Belgium. It was with approximately these numbers that she attempted to face the German avalanche, comforting herself—since it was necessary now not merely to give effect to promises, but to throw back the enemy—with the thought that, by summoning her men to do their duty, by reminding Britons of Nelson's words, she could, in a few months, improvise an army which would really be able to face that of Germany. She has always waited until the crisis is upon her, before attempting to adjust herself to it.

She was not mistaken in her men; we have seen how they answered to the appeal. The enthusiasm was such that in the autumn of 1914 they were

[1] It must be noted that, of the regular army, one-half (125,000 men) were in the colonies at the beginning of the war. Mr. Oliver (*Ordeal by Battle*) shows that about 50,000 others were not available for service. The Territorials, who enlist for four years, only have a few days' drill a year, and are not bound to serve outside England.

pointing to the date (April) when a million new trained soldiers would be fighting on the French and Flemish fronts.

In April the new soldiers in England greatly exceeded this number, but they were far from reaching it on the Continent. The reason was, that to fight Germany with any chance of success, something more was needed than the good-will of those who, by the mere act of taking a pledge, so promptly provided their country with armies. It was necessary that the country should organise itself internally for war, and for this purpose, change its methods of work and life, its habits and its very spirit; it was necessary that England, following the example of her enemy, should, as was said later on, completely transform herself into a machine, with all her forces systematically co-ordinated, directed and controlled by a central power, and applied all together to the set purpose. And one fine day it was perceived that, under the strain of this unforeseen and stupendous effort, that old engine, the War Office, whose antiquated administrative mechanism had been strong enough for an army of 250,000 regulars, had completely broken down. The very success of Lord Kitchener in calling into being new legions brought in its train the bankruptcy of the bureaucracy. The Government had felt this bankruptcy coming, had tried several times to stave it off. Towards the middle of May 1915 it could no longer be prevented; it was openly revealed, producing on the public the impression of a "scandal"—for that was

how our Allies stigmatised their munition crisis. At once, but after a delay already of ten months —and that was England's great mistake; but after all, what belligerent foresaw exactly what this war would be? — England began the vast and deep process of adaptation which was to change her, in the very midst of the struggle, into a military power of the same order as those of the Continent. The machine which France and Germany had built in forty or fifty years (much more in the case of Prussia), which the enemy had kept so perfectly regulated, so well oiled, that he had only to touch a button in order to set it going and obtain instantly its maximum power, England was obliged, during the course of the war, to set up from the very foundation, collecting all the materials and putting them together bit by bit. Besides, she was destitute of that central and supreme authority, whose despotic foresight might have shortened such an undertaking. For each novel operation of the State she had to canvass and consult a myriad-headed, constantly shifting public opinion. This is always a slow and difficult business, and more so, when the enterprise runs counter to the most inveterate ideas and habits, to the very root principle of the nation. The problem was, for the most unsystematic people in the world, to accommodate themselves to a system; for the people who worshipped liberty, to submit to servitude; for the nation which was, and always had been, the least military, to accept the yoke of militarism. This great effort at adaptation will be better understood

if we look first at the anxieties and sudden misgivings from which it sprang in the tenth month of the war.

II

I myself watched the Munitions Affair pretty closely, not in its administrative and technical details, but in its general effect on the public, which was to awaken England to the idea of her shortcomings, and to show her the whole of her problem, stirring up at the same time the desire to solve it. It had scarcely begun when I arrived in London on May 20, but I felt a crisis in the air at once.

People looked gloomy, and it struck me as a good sign. The feeling of danger is necessary to stimulate Old England to shake off age-long habits and prejudices, to force her really to think, and brace herself for real effort. But it is by no means easy to upset her feeling of security. That is why, with the English, for many years, and most of all to-day, patriotism and pessimism have become identified. To sound the alarm bell had been the incessant endeavour of the great newspapers which favoured conscription: *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Morning Post* and *The Standard*, from that day in July 1914 when the thunder-cloud rose so quickly and cast its sinister shadow over Europe. From time to time during all the first year of the war they kept on counting up the forces, the successes, the formidable dangers threatened

by the enemy, or they published letters from neutrals of such a nature that, in any other country, their correspondents would have been suspected of being paid by Germany; in fact Sven Hedin himself did not extol so highly the resources, the self-confidence, the method and organisation of Germany.[1]

Not that any one ever doubted of success. In the month of May, just as to-day, the only anxiety was as to the length of the struggle and the price it would be necessary to pay for victory. A communication to *The Times* (May 14) had just revealed the shortage of shells, and its consequence to the troops, who were cut down in their attacks for lack of sufficient artillery preparation. All that the officers could do was to hold their ground heroically with their men, under hurricanes of shells. The War Office had given wrong orders, manufacturing shrapnel when high explosive was required! It had failed to avail itself of the industrial resources of the country: factories, the plant of which could be used for the production of shells, had not been set to work: in the State arsenals not even all the normal staff was employed; the officials had refused the proffered help of English iron-masters! Such were the revelations which, starting with

[1] At the end of November 1915, Sir John Simon complained in Parliament of this systematic pessimism and demonstrated what advantage the German Government had obtained in Germany, Bulgaria, Greece and Roumania from certain over-gloomy articles of *The Times* and *Daily Mail*. See especially the articles in *The Times* (July 1915), on the superiority of German organisation. The object, of course, was to stir up England to effort by the contrast.

that telegram to *The Times*, all the Conservative papers were beginning to publish; the others, fearing high-handed measures on the part of the Government, endeavoured to reassure the public. But the daily lists of dead and wounded were growing terribly long, and thereon even the most simple-minded began to ponder. Those who were in mourning thought of sons, brothers, husbands whom they would never see again, who, perhaps would still have been alive if there had been enough guns and shells. Thus arose a great wave of public opinion, paving the way for the reform which no English Prime Minister could have introduced if he had not felt the country behind him. It would be necessary probably to subject certain industries to State control: that is to say, to meddle with habits not only very old, but hallowed with the prestige which all old things enjoy in England. And, much more than this, it would be necessary to tamper with that which should never be touched, the sacrosanct "liberty of the subject." For that which differentiates the Englishman from men of all other nations is his personal freedom at every moment and in all the acts of life. He will be no longer free if he loses the right to strike, if he is subjected to restraints of a foreign, "continental" type, which—according to a vague, dumb sentiment very deep-rooted in the British people—constitute the inferiority of "Continentals";—in fine, if it is no longer of his own free will that he shoulders a gun, or works in a factory. Hence the slowness with which—and this in the very

presence of the enemy—the country organised herself for the fight; an organisation which depended, not on the decision of the Government, but on the slow and spontaneous harmonising of private opinions and wills. Hence the necessity of press campaigns, and propaganda of all sorts, in order to mass and direct opinion, till the moment came for those compulsory measures which the best-informed had at once demanded; and whose urgency some, indeed, had not waited for the war to proclaim.

In fact, as in all the great crises of her history, England was learning from actual experience. There was much groping and inadequacy at first, as always in this country of empiricism and tradition; then, after partial failures, and a long series of surprises and fresh starts, she gradually adjusted herself to difficulties which she never foresaw, just as they came along. This is perhaps the method of life itself—progressive, instinctive, and productive, if given time, of fruitful and lasting organic developments; it is, at all events, the characteristic method of England, as revealed in the constitution and all the institutions of this country, and the very opposite of that German method, which, first setting up sheer theory, and co-ordinating the means for a predetermined end, rapidly produces mechanical constructions—of which Germany herself is one. But the mechanical may kill the organic before the latter has completed its defensive transformations, for spontaneous adaptation is always slow, especially when the living creature, having reached

a certain age, is subject to the influences of a long past and firmly wedded to its acquired shape and tendencies. Slow and fragmentary, for the vital effort at adjustment does not act synchronously on all the organs. England, for instance, which at the beginning of hostilities did not count three hundred thousand soldiers, had set on foot an army of more than two million men. It was a miracle without a precedent in history; unfortunately, the development of material resources for the equipment of this army did not keep pace with its numbers. Very often in life, organs which are complementary to each other as parts of the same system—or even the complementary parts of the same organ—are the result of a distinct evolution from differing elements. And, indeed, the question of equipment was of a quite different nature, and much more complex, than the question of men. The increase in the numbers of the latter depended only on the progress of opinion. Nothing more was required than to stir it up: more and more men understood England's need and enlistments grew apace. But the ammunition problem was chiefly industrial, and raised at once all kinds of technical, social and even political difficulties, which the State alone, whose authority in England is so limited, could, by a sudden and quite novel assumption of directing and organising powers, attempt to solve. It would have to interfere, in many trades, between capital and labour, not as an optional arbitrator, but as a despot; it would have, in order to win the good-will of the workmen, to limit the profits of

shareholders and masters; it would have to meddle with the rights of the trade unions, rights consecrated by seventy-five years of legislation and judicial administration. It would have, perhaps, and that without any sanction from precedent, to impose on whole populations, such as the miners of Wales, the restraints of labour under military conditions—in other words, to limit the liberties which Englishmen, for more than three centuries, have proudly regarded as their inheritance and special privilege amongst the nations. The State could never dare to undertake, England would never accept, such measures except under the scourge of necessity. That scourge had not yet been sufficiently felt, and, on the whole, things had been allowed to drift, government and country relying on the mere strength of the English will—*to see this thing through*—to hold out, to hew a path, without any extravagant expenditure of thought, through all future difficulties, with the help, of course, of Providence, but chiefly of the national genius for retrieving initial mistakes, and concluding every war, in accordance with the demands of morality, by the triumph of the better.

There are two very significant phrases that the English often use in their moments of self-criticism—they have many such moments. The one is "the happy-go-lucky system," the beginning anyhow, as nature does in her operations, which always seem so accidental; a system of relying on the knack which things have of dis-

entangling themselves, especially if, as is usual in England, a patient will, which never planned anything beforehand, drives them persistently, day by day, towards the desired end. Notice that this *is* really a system, and one which, after all, has always succeeded—founded on faith in the processes and spontaneous operations of life and instinct, in opposition to the activities and results of rational thought. Macaulay expounded the theory of this English system; Dilke once gave me this definition of it: "absence of system"; and Kipling has defined the main principle of English moral and social discipline as: "understanding that you are not to understand." Was it a mere irony when, in a recent fictitious dialogue, Sir Thomas Barclay put these words into the mouth of a German professor—"the English have a great advantage over us: evolution is more natural and easy when there is no cerebral activity to introduce any complications into it"? A great many English people share in all seriousness the views of that professor. For, make no mistake, it is not here a question of any incapacity, but of a definitely adopted social method. Purely and simply, great intellectual activity is not very much admired in England. It is a remarkable feature of this country to value many things more highly than mere intelligence and learning; this is well illustrated by the typical schools of the gentry whose open-air games, compulsory and educative, form the chief part of the curriculum. Two necessary consequences follow. First—not perhaps amongst

the working masses, but amongst those who have received the plastic influences of the genuine and properly English culture—there is a greater development of physical perfection, a greater strength of nerve: freshness of mind and youth of body are preserved longer, one may perhaps even say (see the obituaries of *The Times* and *Morning Post*) that longevity is more frequent. This, surely, is something. On the other hand, there is nothing in England to compare with the great intellectual public of Paris which, without rising above a certain level—since it is not composed, after all, either of creative artists or of original thinkers, and is indeed but an average—can nevertheless talk on every subject, judge, discuss and criticise every production of art and thought; and, precisely because its opinion is so influential, is inclined to deny the existence of such as do not suit its particular tastes and habits, and to oppose what goes beyond its own standards and criteria. Yet—and here is the paradox for those who would like to sacrifice everything to knowledge and mental culture — this England, which is so unintellectual, has never ceased to produce her full share of thinkers and inventors, of geniuses and men of talent, and has remained as constantly as our country in the first rank of civilisation. Still, when a determined attack suddenly demands new expedients, the forces of habit and recourse to precedents are not sufficient: you may be taken too unawares.

Not less significant is that other phrase, ironically invented by Lord Rosebery during the Boer

War: *to muddle through. Muddling through*—that is, through confusion after confusion, mistake on mistake, failure on failure, to succeed, nevertheless, in getting out of your scrape. Such a method is expensive and requires plenty of time. It is true that in England, perhaps because it is the country of tradition, time counts for much less than elsewhere. Conrad, the Anglo-Polish novelist, has symbolised this method, together with the whole national psychology, in the story of that admirable and taciturn sailor who, confronted with an enormous and sudden fall of the barometer, refused to open the navigation handbook in which he would have found the theory of cyclones, because, like an Englishman of the old stock, he despised principles and theories, and with the imperturbability of an ox, went right through the centre of an appalling typhoon, saving his ship, nevertheless, by dint of dumb and dogged courage, indefatigable patience and careful attention to each monstrous towering wave as it arose —perhaps, too, by dint of miraculous good luck, though surely such valorous determination alone ought to compel success, whatever the lack of thought. *We'll muddle through!* was the cry but yesterday, just as sixteen years ago in the face of all the unforeseen difficulties of the South African War. But in May 1915 the remark was often added: "Yes, but *what* a muddle!" Anxiety was visible. The appeal to the stoical and well-trained will, to "*character*," the old English injunction, "If at first you don't succeed, try again," were no longer sufficient. Or, rather,

it was no longer a question of "trying again," but of changing one's methods, and perhaps oneself, of giving up those tendencies and qualities of the collective English mind which are so particularly insular, those ways of thinking and doing crystallised by time into hereditary habits, into automatic systems of action: almost, one might say, the English character,—and that in order to remodel oneself on the continental plan. A hard thing, this, for a people that worships its traditions, to which long ages have given such persistency. Just like the first unpleasant surprise of the Boer War (lucky war which compelled England to a first attempt at adaptation!), the munitions scandal set the country questions which by instinct it had avoided as long as possible—questions of fundamental principles.

And first it set them a question, most pressing of all, speedily to be solved. Given a government born of traditional party conflicts, essentially averse to making war, constituted to carry out a certain programme of domestic reforms, which had occupied the whole attention of Parliament and the electorate—given a popular, democratic government, resting on the opinion of an ill-informed majority, and which dares, as it has clearly shown, neither to thwart that majority nor to enlighten it—is such a government competent to wage a deadly war against the trained staff of specialists, all powerful in prestige and authority, which directs everything on the German side? And more generally speaking, in a

question of life and death, when quick adaptation, efficient discipline and system had become, all of a sudden, urgent necessities, what was to be thought of the old English method which left everything to be decided by the free, gradual and mutual adjustment of private activities? Could the old commercial and liberal principle of *laisser-faire*, of "live and let live," which made the greatness and beauty of England in the peaceful reign of Victoria, still be valid, under the threat and the blows of such a war? Was it still the moment for persuasion and discussion, or had the time at last come for command and obedience?

The moment you set foot in England to-day, you feel these questions in the air. Travelling up from Folkestone, before even I had heard these doubts expressed, their disquieting presence vaguely affected my mind. I was turning over the leaves of an English book, garnished with photographs of the Kaiser's friends and advisers. By the side of the War Lord were the soldier kings and princes of Bavaria, Wurtemberg and Saxony, the Crown Prince, the Admiral Prince Henry of Prussia, who paid England a visit of such careful scrutiny just before the attack; and underneath: Von Moltke, Von der Goltz, Von Tirpitz, Von Koster, Von Bethmann-Hollweg, Count Zeppelin, Bernhardi, Prince Furstemberg, Prince and General von Bülow, Krupp, Von Bohlen, Ballin, Hamman, Dernburg, Delbrück, Rohrbach, Rathenau, Thyssen, Von Gwinner, generals, admirals, statesmen, heads of naval or

pan-German leagues, great financiers, great ship-owners, engineers, captains of industry, hard-headed realists, all moved by the same fanatical ideal of race and fatherland, or the same greed for profits and conquests, all having lived for years in the thought of war, most of them initiated into the secrets of the great scheme, and eager for its success, most of them used to command and organisation, to managing men and affairs: a staff of technical experts, each one of whom had specialised in some particular part of the formidable machine which a single touch has set in motion.

Then, looking in a magazine at a picture of a great sitting of the Commons, I recognised the agreeable and familiar faces of the British statesmen and parliamentary leaders: Mr. Asquith, an honest and sagacious barrister, perhaps, as such, and as a party leader, more inclined to think of the words and arguments which win verdicts and divisions than of the facts, which have no voice, yet in politics, never fail to develop their consequences—Mr. Asquith whose wary attitude of "*Wait and see*" was so suddenly upset by a terrible necessity for action; Mr. Lloyd George, once a solicitor, in whom the flame of idealism burns through sparks of Celtic wit and fancy, a great administrator, a great tribune of the people, whose eloquence has since done so much to bring over the trade unions to the idea of the disciplined, national effort—and yet with what fire he indicted and ridiculed, in 1910, the "scare-mongers," the dismal prophets of the German

war (I can still hear the laughter and applause of the working men at Peckham)! Lord Haldane, the student and thinker, the "specialist in German affairs," who was proclaiming before the war his "personal debt" to Germany, and talked of the advocates of conscription as "political amateurs:" and, indeed, Lord Roberts was a specialist only of military necessities, and a mere amateur in the politics of committee room and lobby; Mr. Churchill, once a journalist, the *enfant terrible* and the *enfant gâté* of his party, the man of brilliant inspirations, reproached with putting too much faith in the intuitions of his own genius, and relying more on them in his management of the navy than on the advice of sailors; Sir Edward Grey, so modest, so scrupulous, so refined, the incarnate type of the *gentleman*, who tried to set an example of good-will to the Germans by signing the Declaration of London, invented by them to limit the rights and powers of the English navy; Mr. Balfour, the philosopher; Mr. Birrell, the critic; Lord Crewe, Lord Curzon, Lord Lansdowne, and the others—all of them debaters, writers, well used to the traditional parliamentary cricket, accustomed to solve every difficulty by long formal debates and the division bell; all of them conscientious, thoughtful, well-bred men, so courteous in their bearing, so moderate in their behaviour, the finished product of an ancient and deeply moral and Christian culture which forbids above everything violence and the sudden yielding to instinct and passion—all of them innocent of any desire for, or experience of, war.

Between the two teams—what a contrast! How clear it was to me, looking at the but too civilised British, that their very virtues, their humanity, their breeding, their faith in conscience, their candidness, must have left them disarmed before the professional brigands, who had so well prepared their masks, their pistols and their ambush![1]

On visiting a few friends, authors, professors, magazine editors—chiefly Liberals—these first impressions gained in strength. At the challenge hurled at everything they respected, at the cynicism, the enormity of the scheme, and the frenzied resolution with which it was being carried out, they remained silent, abashed and horror-stricken. Between the idea which these honourable men had formed of progress and human dignity, and such manifestations of human nature, the contrast was shocking. An Englishman has compared these refined idealists to gentle, pastoral creatures suddenly confronted by the tiger in whom they had refused to believe. Before such a formidable and abrupt enemy theirs was the attitude of pure innocence, of helpless incompetence.

But certain herbivora, when the surprise is over, know how to form a herd which will end by trampling the monster to death. Such was the resolu-

[1] To play the game more scrupulously by observing the Declaration of London, though it had not been ratified by Parliament, they abstained for several months from declaring cotton and corn contraband of war, and, still more curiously, the navy received orders to let pass the German reservists whom Germany was summoning home. Germans were allowed full liberty of movement in England.

tion which I felt brooding beneath this silence. I heard it for the first time expressed with some ingenuousness; it had been resolved, I was told—Mr. Asquith had stated it in the House of Commons—to prosecute, after the war, the responsible authors of the worst atrocities. Yes, William II and Von Tirpitz would become acquainted with "hard labour" or the gallows. If any one hinted at the shortcomings of England, at the immensity of the problems to be solved, at the incredible strength and existing advantages of the enemy, he was heard in silence. But sometimes a short sentence, uttered quite simply, and almost in an undertone, expressed the essential fact: *We'll never give in.* And I felt at once, what indeed I already knew, that the idea of giving in, of not fighting to a finish, let the war last one year or ten, would never enter these minds—that this was simply psychologically impossible. History has demonstrated that such a resolution is the force that the enemy must consider before almost any other; for nothing will wear it out, and in the long run it has always overcome everything—which does not mean that in our mechanical age it will always be sufficient. Beneath the perfect good form and restraint of modern, civilised Englishmen, the primitive trait of the race subsists, the determination not to yield, to go on fighting, though beaten. It reappears whenever a closely pressed attack, or a success of the enemy, casts doubt upon the conviction, which this people still retains, despite everything, of its own superiority: a secret, an almost unconscious conviction, because

it lies so deep: a dumb conviction, because it has reached that degree of strength and habit which does not call for expression.

This same steadfast will, when governed by conscience, is what they call *character*. And character means everything to the English; all their education tends to its development, to teaching it as the supreme English virtue, the source of English strength, the guarantee of English success. On its magic power they relied more than on anything else, at the beginning of the war, to force a way to victory. Only in May 1915 was the discovery being made that the way to victory lay through discipline and organisation.

Meanwhile, on our side of the Channel, six months ago, England seemed a bit slow in getting under way. Under the terrific strain, with the life blood of France flowing fast away, people did not try to understand: they knew but their need of help and their impatience. The same feeling had sent me across the Channel. I wanted to know; and for a few days, amongst old friends, I ventured to put, more or less bluntly, certain haunting questions, which have now ceased to puzzle us, since we know the answers. Why did our Allies only hold such a short sector of our front? Had we not been led to hope that by April a million soldiers in khaki would be standing side by side with ours? Soldiers were to be seen everywhere in the neighbourhood of London—everywhere, I was told, throughout England: in the towns, and in hundreds of new camps. One

heard of fifteen hundred thousand men, half of them fully trained, who had not yet crossed the Channel. What were they waiting for? Did the British understand that France was fighting day and night along a line of six hundred kilomètres—in Alsace, in Argonne, in Champagne, in Artois, in Flanders—and that battles greater than that of Leipzig were taking place? Had they no idea of the rate at which the substance of France was wasting away? Probably, by an inevitable optical illusion, the English saw but the English front. They saw it as I saw it one day at a club where I was consulting the two maps of the western front posted up in the hall: one on a very large scale showed the British lines; the other, only half the size, represented from La Bassée to Mulhouse, a country seven times as extensive. A rather naïve way of looking at things—but very natural; for the big scale map showed our friends the places where their sons have died or are still fighting: Mons, where five hundred of their officers fell; Neuve Chapelle, where they lost six hundred and fifty—the flower of the gentry and the aristocracy laid low. For if England has made mistakes—and which of the belligerents has not?—let us never forget that she has paid for them, and that the main mistake, from which all the others have sprung, was not to have prepared for war. Let us remember, to her great honour, that when that war broke out on the Continent, she plunged into it from a sheer sense of duty, against all German expectations, when for a struggle on land she was almost destitute of strength. I

quickly ceased to ask these questions: they did not offend, they simply gave pain: the admiration and respect for the France which the war has revealed are so great! No reply was given me; only some whispered words of surprise and regret. To listen with scrupulous attention to what prejudice or pride would angrily repel, in deference to justice and truth, is one of the fine features of a "gentleman's" creed. I was allowed only too easily to have my point.

Besides, the more I read, the less it seemed to me that we were justified in putting such questions; they began to appear idle. For, first, on English soil, I was learning to understand better the hard, silent, but probably decisive, part played by the English Navy. After all, the Allies owe to it all the trump cards (supremacy of the sea, conquest of the German colonies) which they could play against the "tricks" taken by Germany, if negotiations had to be opened to-day. Then, too, where training schools, arsenals and powder factories existed for an army of only two hundred and fifty thousand men—an army which has never rehearsed war on the great scale as those of the Continent do every year—how could it be possible in six or eight months to train, to officer, to equip, to arm, to transport and to manœuvre efficiently, two millions of volunteers called together by an unparalleled outburst of enthusiasm? And more, is it possible to do this in the first year of a war in which the expenditure in munitions and officers has, from the out-

set, surpassed ten and a hundred times everything foreseen, with manufacturers overloaded from the beginning with Serbian, Russian, and French orders, and whose most efficient workmen have left the factory for the flag by tens of thousands? And, speaking more generally, was it humanly possible to change, in less than a year, the trend of a country like England, the most immovable of all, the most obstinately attached to her traditions, the strongest in her resistance to foreign suggestions, and to improvise those authoritative powers of control which, in Germany and France, the State has so long possessed? It may be said that, with a little foresight and in the light of French experience, the necessary evolution could have been accelerated, that signs of the coming catastrophe had not been lacking for the last ten years—that Lord Haldane in 1912 had a sudden presentiment of it; for it was with unsealed eyes that he came back from Berlin, and we know now that he warned his colleagues: has he not even added that, in an indirect way, in a fashion familiar to readers of Browning, by means of cautious hints, which should have been sufficient, he thought he had made the great public understand?[1] Of course, all could not have been remedied: what we have seen during the war is enough to show that in time of peace the great bulk of the nation, and, especially the workmen, could not have been prevailed upon to sacrifice their principles and their liberty. But, without attempting to establish conscription, would

[1] Speech at Leeds, February 17th, 1912.

it not have been possible to speed up work in the Government arsenals, instead of allowing it to fall almost to nothing, to employ more mechanics instead of reducing their numbers, to prepare officers for the army which it would be necessary to create one day: finally, to attract more students to the military schools?

Only, such questions do not apply to England our ally, but to that earlier England of the last ten years; to governments too dependent on public opinion not to follow instead of leading it; to politicians too busy with popular reforms—their sole reason for existence—to recognise more pressing necessities; to a democracy too wrapped up in its dreams, passions and party strifes to look abroad and see the coming of its aggressor. And moreover, it is not to England alone that such questions apply. In the struggle for life of the nations, the reign of public opinion, the catch-words which lead the crowd—*clap-trap*, as the English say—and ballot papers lose their virtue in presence of an enemy drilled by strong leaders—leaders who are greedy for plunder, scientifically trained and informed, carefully attentive to the strong and weak points of their intended prey, to every fact that may serve or thwart their scheme and to nothing but facts. This old weakness of all democracies was well known in ancient Athens. Better, however, the weakness and the danger, with liberty, than strength, if in order to be strong we must force ourselves—souls and bodies—into a machine, to live and die there!

And then, if you insist on criticising the inadequacies of the past, will not a pacific democracy retort—and this is Lord Haldane's argument—that by arming efficiently for resistance, far from discouraging attack, you would have hastened it. When a desperate robber holds you covered by his revolver, your first movement for defence is called a provocation.

III

On the whole, the more we study the general conditions of the problem which the war set before England, the more we look into the circumstances, the better we see that everything was bound to happen, as is always the case in questions which do not concern individuals but a nation—that is to say, large numbers and mean numbers. Of all the conditions, the most general, and to which we have ever to recur, is that England, by tradition, is the country of individualism and liberty, a country which has not been invaded since the Conquest and in which the State has not been given powers to compel the individual.[1]

[1] There is, no doubt, the *Defence of the Realm Act*, which allows a censorship (very lax to French eyes) of the Press. No attempt has yet (November 1915) been made to apply this law against the interests and habits of the working class. After the munitions scandal it was necessary to pass a new Act which curtailed some of the rights of labour. As will be seen, this law could not be enforced.

These powers it can receive only from the majority. Now in a nation of forty-five millions, most of whom are quite incapable of imagining suddenly what they have never seen, direct perception, or the gradually suggested sense of necessity, can alone bring the mass to accept a form of control contrary to its traditions, prejudices and class interests, as well as to the moral and religious ideas which it conceives to be the truth. This mass, already hostile to measures which it damned by the one word "militarism," included at the beginning of the war all the working classes, all the dissenting bodies—on the whole the bulk of the Radical party. To the workmen especially, the conscription of labour, like military conscription, seemed a device of the old governing caste, trying to recover its long-lost power, a plot of the rich and the Tories, against the slowly won and jealously guarded rights and privileges of their trade unions—which are to them, when dealing with the masters and capitalists, precisely what the free cities with their charters were to the burgesses of the Middle Ages in their relations with the feudal lords. One effect of the munitions crisis was to relax their resistance. Not that the greater number of the workmen gave up, immediately or for long, their special class point of view; but, under the pressure of the published facts, of such tragic import to Britain, to thousands of British families, since the lack of organisation was resulting in the futile sacrifice of hosts of soldiers, a feeling of urgency sprang up throughout the country,

and an active party was at once formed to give it voice and to translate it into a demand for immediate legislation.

Now the munitions scandal could not have taken place earlier: this is obvious if we consider for a moment the technical reasons of the delay. At the beginning of the war the British factories had done, on the whole, everything that was asked of them. They had succeeded in equipping the troops, in supplying enormous stocks of provisions, in building camps, and in addition they had done much work for the Allies.[1] In October 1914 munitions ran short, but the same thing happened at the same moment to all the belligerents, none of whom had foreseen the special form the war would take, and the supreme part which guns would play in it. All of them had the winter before them to replenish their artillery parks, to create new ones, to restock and then to multiply by ten or a hundred, their former magazines. In the spring, with the new offensive movements, would be seen for each belligerent

[1] Here are, according to Mr. J. M. Kennedy (*Fortnightly*, April 15th), some of the orders placed during the first three months of the war. A single Northampton firm accepted an order for one million five hundred thousand boots for France. Russia ordered from the factories of the midlands, motor-cars to the value of £300,000. Sheffield and Birmingham turned out millions of pounds' worth of barbed wire, hospital cots, trench spades, camp material and tools of all sorts. The same activity has prevailed in the textile factories of Leicestershire and Yorkshire, the foundries, armament works and dockyards of Coventry, Newcastle, Tyneside, and the Clyde. Add to this that the arsenals and gunpowder factories had to meet the requirements of the gigantic navy.

the result of his labours.[1] In the spring, when the Germans ring up their curtain, they are seen overwhelming the Russians under a storm of seven hundred shells fired in twenty-four hours and in the same battle, whilst the British find themselves almost destitute of munitions and unable to attack. Nor can the War Office at this moment be accused of negligence. No doubt—and this is the great fault of the Government—they had omitted, when the danger was already understood, to arm the country for a possible war. But during the period under survey, in the course of which all alike made fresh preparations, they did what they could. They even foresaw the crisis which arose in May, and tried to stave it off. But whilst Germany—much richer, to start with, in machine tools and lathes (they are one of her specialties)—made use, for the manufacturing of her new war material, of all her engineering shops, which had lost their foreign markets, thus transforming her economic loss into a military advantage; whilst France could rely on the output of ten national factories, foundries and gunpowder mills, and add to these the production of many private establishments under military control, the War Office was obliged to apply to firms which, in order to satisfy such a sudden and unprecedented demand for guns and shells, had first to create an enormous and most elaborate plant—

[1] On the origins of the munitions crisis see the article of Mr. Arthur Shadwell, "Industrial Labour and the War" (*Nineteenth Century*, August 15th, 1915).

and these were private firms, subject both to the confusions of free competition and to the trade union regulations which restrict the speed of labour. Against these regulations and this anarchy, against strikes and lock-outs, it was deprived of direct means; it could only try persuasion, and it did try it. Several times the Government took part in conferences with the representatives of the trade unions and of the masters. In order to accelerate and co-ordinate the work, a central commission, drawn from the local committees, was appointed. They thought they had succeeded; production was, in fact, multiplied three or four fold: it should have increased a hundred times.

To give the Government the powers it lacked, a spontaneous movement on the part of the nation was required, and for such a movement England, to whom experience is everything, required a lesson, a striking object lesson. She got it; and the impression was as deep as it was sudden. The telegram to *The Times* is dated May 14th, and the new Government, in which both parties joined to undertake the great necessary measures, was formed on the 26th. Then it is that the national effort begins and develops progressively, through much opposition, but more and more resolute, definite and widespread, productive of measures which go far beyond the original necessity—measures which seem to lead the country perhaps to conscription, at all events to paradoxical developments of the "voluntary system" which amount almost

to compulsory service. Once started, the movement spreads in ever-widening circles. The question is no more of organising the production of munitions: it is of organising England.

November 1915.[1]

[1] See Appendix C.

ADAPTATION

I

In order to organise England the first thing was to organise public opinion. This is necessary in a democracy, where the State has no prestige and no power to command, where also it lacks the means of exerting pressure on public opinion. The newspapers are not under its orders as they are, more or less openly, in Germany. It is not served by an army of 500,000 civil servants. Neither university professors nor elementary schoolmasters are dependent on the State. It is not even represented by officials like our *Préfets*, who are there to direct politically their "administrés," that is to say, the population.

In England public opinion organises itself, and pretty quickly, when urgent questions arise. This is a result of natural adaptation; it is a form of reaction gradually acquired, and now become instinctive, because necessary in a country where no measure of national safety can be taken unless opinion insists upon it. At the end of May, it was given to the writer to see the beginning of this operation, an operation that was to result in really organic changes. Its progress and each of its different

phases could be followed from day to day. First came the alarm bell of *The Times*, which all the great newspapers re-echoed; then questions in Parliament, meetings throughout the country, with speeches by the chief party leaders and popular speakers;—after this, letters from the public to the papers, examining the new question from all sides, many of them signed by famous names—authors, professors, bishops;—on the fifth day, the first posters, put up by the voluntary recruiting committees, summoning the workmen, by striking pictures, to work in the munition factories; and at the same time, at all the newsagents and on the railway bookstalls, the first propaganda pamphlets;—on the following Sunday in the towns, in Church and Chapel alike, sermons delivered by famous preachers, stimulating the minds to the idea of the unanimous and necessary effort. A week later, in a little country church, where the Rector was addressing his congregation of farmers and labourers, I heard the last vibrations of the alarm bell passing over the quiet rural world.

We saw what the sensation was. England was realising what she lacked in order to fight Germany: a systematic organisation commanded from above. Insufficiently directed by a party government which had never imagined any other enemy than the opposition party, left to her routine, to her faith in the happy tendency of private activities to adjust themselves mutually for the general welfare, England, in this war in

which industrial superiority seemed to play the decisive part, England, the classic country of mechanical industry on the great scale, had shown herself for ten months powerless—some people said openly: incompetent. Towering furnaces, forges, foundries, factories unceasingly covered with a pall of everlasting smoke, her northern and western counties, yet she had not been able to cast, turn, and forge the cannon and shells, the accumulation of which, still more than the numbers of the men, would compel victory. Such a fact seemed amazing and all-important. Not only did it leave English soldiers defenceless in face of an enemy who had increased his armament to an incredible extent, not only did it detain in England the greater part of the new troops, which for lack of arms and munitions it was futile to send to be shot down by the Germans, but it discredited England in the eyes of many Englishmen, for it betrayed what seemed a national inaptitude. Thus it called in question the fundamental habits and principles of the English community. In these extraordinary circumstances it was clear that the individual should no longer be free, that he must serve at the post appointed for him by a sovereign and competent authority. The country had to change her whole method of life, the old English method of adaptation after the event, of adjustment under the spur of circumstances. *Wait and see* was, when the war was as yet but threatening, the latest definition of this method: but now to wait for the facts was dangerous. Facts must be foreseen and provided

against; nay, they should be compelled. It was no longer a question of adjustment to reality, but of bringing new realities into being. Thus sprang up the vision of, and the longing for, a new England, similar, but for the state of war, to that of which Mr. H. G. Wells had already sketched an ideal picture—an England ruled by an idea which may thus be defined: co-ordination, discipline, integration of the individual into a system, a system set up by the State for its own purposes, and exacting the subjection of all to national ends. Naturally this idea was sure to meet with resistance, and it still has its opponents. Such changes in the modes and trend of life of an ancient nation, attached to its habits and traditions, can be accepted but slowly, but such was the impelling force of the new idea that it passed at once into acts. Ten days after the alarm raised by *The Times*, the old Radical Government committed harakiri, and a Cabinet was formed such as had never been seen, for it brought together both parties, no doubt in order to attempt measures as unprecedented as itself. Then came the creation of a munitions department directed by Mr. Lloyd George, hitherto a specialist in democratic budgets, but now cheered by the Conservatives, because they know his power, and that no one can speak to the working men as he does — and he did speak to them at once, at Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol (June 3rd, 4th and 12th), and no longer of their rights, but of their duties and of necessary discipline. On the 23rd of June the Munitions Act was passed, which

applied both to masters and workmen, in those establishments which were declared "controlled."[1] Designed to keep the men for whose labour the masters had been competing to their place and work, it limited their wages, but by another and still more direct interference of the State, which was meant to secure the acceptance of the former, it also limited the profits of the masters. At the same time it suspended Trade Union rules, and organised work in its main lines, though the details were left (for the old English tendency asserted itself in spite of everything) to local and private initiative. Finally, on July 8th came the Census, together with the institution of the National Register, on which was to be inscribed the name of every English subject, man or woman, from fifteen to sixty-five years of age, with particulars as to their domestic responsibilities, state of marriage or celibacy, trade or profession and the special services they can render to the nation, whether for industrial or military purposes. By this new census, by this Register which tells the State what use it can make of each for the good of all, the idea that each member of the community, along with all the others, has a social duty, became visible and familiar to all, and people began to consider the possibility of obligations, hitherto regarded as impracticable, in this classic land of individual liberty.

[1] On November 1st, 1349 factories were declared under the control of the Minister of Munitions. At the end of January 1916, Mr. Lloyd George announced the existence of 2500 war factories employing 1,500,000 men and 250,000 women.

II

It seems that the Register, which allows citizens to classify according to the services they can render to the State, should have been hailed with delight by all parties of socialistic tendencies. In England more than anywhere else, war, which they professed to abominate, is bringing into being the system of their dreams. Of this they are aware, and when the war is over they hope to preserve as much as they please of the new measures.[1] From them, nevertheless, arose the chief resistance, which assumed different and shifting forms. On the whole, a few leaders alone are bound by their writings and declarations to unchangeable doctrines; those whom they wish to lead are influenced by impressions that vary according to circumstances and experience, and which Germany did her best from the beginning to turn more and more against herself. There are the plain Radicals—a party that has always disapproved of war—some of them impenitent pacifists, all of them opposed, before any debate, and out of principle, to conscription—but most of them, in the long run, yield to obvious necessity. There are the workmen, socialists and unionists, who dislike it too, and besides, oppose the law that suspends the rights and rules of their trade unions—but they are the great mass of England, consequently rather indifferent to the philosophical expression of principles, and capable of practical

[1] Hyndman, *Fortnightly Review*, March 14th, 1915.

common sense. These realise by degrees what a war with Germany means. As it gradually develops (it takes them time to change their ideas), as a result, above all, of the insults and crimes of the enemy, patriotic feelings begin to rise in them, together with that fighting instinct which lies at the bottom of every Englishman, that dogged resolution, if the opponent is worth the effort, to have the best of the fight. Following upon the munitions scandal, a few leaders of the Labour Party, Messrs. Roberts, Ben Tillett, and Hodge, founded the "Socialist Committee for National Defence" (July 21st). These leaders reject the principle of compulsory service, but they are all the more fervent in preaching voluntary enlistment. Lastly, there are the incorruptibles, the inflexibles, the fanatics of the Independent Labour Party, who do not oppose only conscription, but all forms of national service, military or industrial, voluntary or compulsory — in fact, the idea of going on with the war—and who pledge themselves not to take part in the recruiting propaganda—nay, in war work of any kind, or to work in any establishment brought by the new law under State control.

One idea all these groups have fought from the beginning—that of compulsion; and some seem bent on fighting it to the end. This is a paradox of which we had already caught a glimpse: whilst the Conservatives, suddenly eager for justice and less anxious than usual for liberty, demand the innovation which will make every citizen a servant of the State, the enemies of the estab-

lished social order, of the old individualistic *laisser-faire*, those who were talking before the war of "nationalising" certain industries, in fact, the ancient champions of the rights of the State, attack the new idea of social discipline, and this in the name of the rights of the individual. Some, even, discovering beauties they had never suspected in the main principle of the old system, appeal to the historic "liberties of the subject"—nay, to quote a Radical like Mr. Hobhouse, to the "fundamental traditions of the kingdom." Conscription appears to them, so says another Radical, Mr. Lansbury, as *a revolution;* and this word they utter with the same reprobation as Burke in 1790, or Tennyson at the memories of '48. With Herbert Spencer, whose book was an attack on all the dogmas of socialism, and whose words they now seem to remember, they have become the champions of "liberty against government." Quite unexpectedly these former champions of the State against the individual, these upholders of an international collectivism born in Germany and France, feel a sudden enthusiasm for the ancient and peculiarly English idea, from which sprang the liberalism of all other countries, and which produced the long and strenuous resistance of England to the socialist propaganda. The last argument that might have been expected from these friends of humanity, from these apostles of universal reason, is that conscription is "contrary to the genius of the English people." Declining now to subordinate the individual to the needs of the State, refusing

to seek salvation elsewhere than through individual initiative, these defenders of the proletariat suddenly find themselves in sympathy with the liberal, capitalist, and middle-class school of Manchester, which, laying down as its initial principle the absolute liberty of the individual, and deducing therefrom the unconditional rights of property, bound the two dogmas together into one sacred formula.

The reason is that, in general, socialism aims especially at the happiness of individuals, of individuals of a certain class—true it is that they form the vast majority. It is interested much less in society, conceived as a distinct, collective being, which another society might attack, and the idea of which demands sacrifices, than in the well-being of a certain social category. The proof of this is that these same English socialists—I refer chiefly to a few leaders—still insist, when it is a question of class war, on recommending the discipline and even the compulsory measures, which horrify them when it is only the national war that is in question. They do not allow the State to bind the workman to a certain task in the national machinery of defence, but they are quite ready to force him, by actual compulsion, to enter the war machine which a trade union is. In obedience to the rules of his trade union, to the orders of his managing committee, he must strike, he must reduce his hours of work, he must slacken his speed, or refuse this or that particular piece of work. For these people, the real war is not that which the country is waging against Germany: the

idea of a Germany bent upon conquests has not yet dawned upon their minds. The war they wish to wage is still the domestic war which their party or their unions carry on against the masters whom they know, the war which they would like to carry on against the whole of that capitalist class, which revolutionary socialism, continental in its origin, and of relatively recent importation, points out as its natural enemy. Theirs is a class patriotism, and for the class-war they consider just and necessary the discipline and the organisation which they will not let English patriotism impose on every Englishman for the national war. In fact, in comparison with the class-war, the only one that counts for them, because chronic and world wide, the latter seems nothing to them but a "local and passing phase," of which the masters and capitalists—all those, in short, whom they call the *English Junkers*—wish to take advantage, in order to realise their long-standing desire, which is to militarise the country and stop the right to strike. Such were the ideas uttered in London (July 29th), at the Miners' Congress, by the president of their federation, Mr. Robert Smillie. He fails to see that this "passing phase" may be like a shell which indeed passes, but kills—that it may kill not only England, as Mr. Lloyd George said at Liverpool when speaking to the working men, but the Labour Party too, and that if, for instance, the metal industries were to be paralysed by a strike like the Welsh coal strike, which threatened about that time to reduce the navy to impotence, but which according to certain socialists "saved

democracy," democracy would run great risk of dying saved. To turn the eyes of these partisans from their too limited point of view and awake them to the realities of the war and of the public danger, one thing is lacking, a thing all the more necessary because, in order to understand and form an opinion, the English mind requires direct sensations and images: that is, the actual experience, or the memories of an invasion. Indeed for some—they are not numerous—it seems doubtful whether this would be sufficient. Mr. Thomas, M.P., who claims to speak in the name of the railway men, does not hesitate to predict a general railway strike if conscription is adopted. The *Daily News* (September 8th, 1915) says that "no price is too high to pay for victory, except the abandonment of the cause for which England stands by the acceptance of conscription." The idea which is current and which was formulated by Mr. Bernard Shaw (who instantly and instinctively took side against English contentions and interests), is that, "under a pretence of fighting Prussian militarism, an attempt is being made to militarise England."

It is not merely in the name of the Rights of the Subject that many socialists, who belong to dissenting denominations, oppose compulsory service; it is in the name of a principle much more ancient and, spiritually, powerful, to which their French comrades would no more think of appealing than to that of individual liberty: I mean the Christian idea—faith in the God of the Bible,

in His Commands, in His Revelation and Judgment. This principle is held by men of every class, and those who base upon it their arguments against compulsory service and warfare of every kind, are to be found in every social grade: they are represented alike in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. "Some of us," says a manifesto of the No-Conscription Fellowship, "have formed our convictions under the influence of the Internationalist movement, others owe them to their Christian religion." In its English, protestant and puritan form, this religion, bringing the solitary soul face to face with a Divine Judge, makes it strictly responsible for all its acts. If a man kills, it is no excuse that he was ordered to do so, even in the case of a soldier, by his superior officer: as we have seen, the English common law does not recognise this excuse. His conscience is his stronghold, which he must hold and on no account surrender. As Sir A. Hamworth said (October 4th), when presiding over a representative assembly of English and Welsh Congregationalists, a man's last refuge is his conscience; that is the foundation of everything; it is the absolute. Now "conscription is the most direct attack on liberty of conscience; it deprives men both of their responsibility and their liberty, to change them into serfs or slaves"; it robs a man of "his soul, which belongs but to him." And, in more general terms, war is a state of sin which must be suppressed at all costs, a revolt against the Christian command of peace and non-resistance to evil. "Your Country and

your King want you," said the recruiting bills and pamphlets. "God, our Father in Heaven, and suffering humanity want you," said a propagandist postcard issued by the pacifists. "Make use of your influence to stop this war, without regard to any earthly interest, for the love of Jesus Christ who taught heroic self-sacrifice, and love stronger than hatred and death." [1]

This is, indeed, the pure Christian principle, more active amongst the Dissenters—Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, who claim a closer adherence to the customs and ideas of the primitive Church—the same principle which the Anglicans also recognise in their prayers for the enemy ("overcome evil with good"), but which, for all that, Anglicanism, born of a compromise, and which never was very particular about logical sequences, by no means applies to the existing circumstances—and the less so as it sees and represents the present war as a war against the "Devil," just as the socialists and pacifists—those, at least, who approve of it or tolerate it—regard and explain it as a "war against war." Nevertheless, even amongst the

[1] In a pamphlet which the pacifists tried to circulate at recruiting meetings, Dr. Alfred Salter, Labour candidate for Bermondsey, said: "Can you imagine Jesus Christ, dressed in khaki, plunging a bayonet into the breast of a German workman? The Son of God firing a machine-gun against an ambushed German column? The Man of Sorrows in a cavalry charge, thrusting, hacking, stabbing, smashing, yelling hurrahs? No, no, such pictures are impossible, and that decides the question for me; I cannot regard even defensive war as permissible. I cannot, therefore, advise any one to engage and take part in, what I consider, wicked and sinful."

Anglicans, there are some, of high official position, closely attached, one would think by their professional duties, to the old social system and tradition, who, looking at the matter from the purely Christian point of view, blame their country for drawing the sword. The Head Master of Eton (the chief of those schools of the upper caste which have handed down for centuries, to each new generation, the aristocratic traditions and discipline), Dr. Lyttelton, declared in the pulpit that the English people were not innocent of the war: they had not lived according to the law of Christ; they had been greedy and selfish. And in another sermon, in which he took as his text the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, he made use of the main German argument: "For forty years past the Central Powers have felt themselves hemmed in, and the methods of this policy are none too creditable to us." [1] Others—the chaplain of a college in Cambridge, for instance—point out that the Church of Christ is an international, and not a national institution, and denounce the archbishops "who speak, with reference to the war, of the menace to the liberty and safety of England and to her position amongst the nations; as if the danger or the urgency could change in any way the commands of the Prince of Peace." No doubt in the University of Cambridge, ten thousand of whose sons have enlisted—in this ancient stronghold of the higher classes, such language is exceptional. But Cambridge, in her old days, was a

[1] Sermon preached at Overstrand, Norfolk, August 19th, 1915.

stronghold, also, of puritanism and evangelicalism. It is, perhaps, because evangelicalism was transmuted in some minds into an active and doctrinaire idealism, that a professor of some repute like Mr. Pigou ventured to brave general opinion by advocating, in May 1915, a form of peace "which would not wound German susceptibilities," and that a master, who is also a writer of great talent, Mr. Lowes Dickinson, denounced as mischievous the division of nations into States of different names—that is to say, the very notion of patriotism.[1] All these philosophers and moralists present one common feature: each follows the same idea which inspired him before the war. They have not, to speak like Mr. Chesterton when he contrasted the insanity of systems with the sanity of common sense, been struck by the unforeseen blow which violently awakens the man of one idea to the vision of the real world, with all its irrational complexity, and smashes to atoms the fictitious and all too logical universe which he has built up for himself by interpreting everything from his own point of view. The blow fell on the Continent, too far away from them: their dream may have been disturbed for a moment, but they soon plunged into it again.

Less pure, more mixed with political passion, seems the idealism of certain leaders of the Independent Labour Party, the organ through which, we were recently informed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, "the Divine Will is at work." Startled by the crime which Germany committed when her

[1] *The War and the Way out of it*, by G. Lowes Dickinson.

armies broke into Belgium, this leader appeared at first to accept the war: but he quickly recovered, declaring first that the crimes of the Germans against civilians were not proved, and then joining the enemy in attacking Sir Edward Grey, as one of the instigators of the war, accusing him of having "played a pretty little game of hypocrisy," and "of having worked deliberately to involve England in the war, whilst making use of Belgium as an excuse." Still more impervious to the attacks of the real, still more immovably tied to his system, to his one-idea'd interpretation of English and French affairs, Mr. E. D. Morel, the son of a Frenchman, continues to attack both his adopted country and the land of his birth, differing in this from Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who, in Germany, only damns his native country in order to devote himself more completely to his adopted fatherland. He had always attacked the Entente with France, advocated an understanding with Germany, supported the contentions of the latter power, and opposed all French enterprise in Morocco; now he founds the Union of Democratic Control, which has for one of its objects to prevent, at the conclusion of peace, the humiliation of Germany, and the real intentions of which become more evident, as the founder more clearly imputes the responsibility for the catastrophe to England and France. Naturally, his philosophy of the war delights the enemy, who does not fail to translate his pronouncements, and to publish the names of the few just men who remain in England: a Burns, a MacDonald, a Morel, a

Ponsonby, a Norman Angel, a Trevelyan, a Shaw, a Bertrand Russell. In reality these "pro-Germans" are but fanatical pacifists, who, seeing all their theories contradicted by the fact of the war, have but one idea—to prove that they were right; that in order to avoid the catastrophe, England's goodwill alone was necessary;—and since the war happened after all, to stop it at once, at all costs. The great lesson of the event which is shaking the world—namely, that the world is not governed by reason, that irrational forces (sentiment, pride, collective dreams, fanaticism, will to power and to conquest) are always latent in nations, producing by their explosions the great upheavals of History, just as the subterranean forces of the globe shaped in the past—and may again to-morrow shatter—the land on which quiet harvests are now growing; that truth reigns no more than reason, since sixty-five million Germans sincerely believe *that which is not*, and since, if they conquer, their delusion and the lie of their masters will prevail: this lesson has failed to impress itself on these theorists and dreamers, who did not feel, like their brothers in France, the earth trembling and ready to open under their feet. A significant feature is that when they write about the war, it is to discuss how it may be turned to profit by English socialism. The idea never seems to occur to them that England might be beaten, and that her defeat would put an end, at least for a time, to many hopes of their socialism.

Fortunately, their influence did not last. At

the very beginning, when the Germans invaded and devastated Belgium, it underwent a sudden and very rapid fall. Men who denied the possibility of the catastrophe by enlarging on the humanity and fraternity of Germany, seem less competent to point out the path of salvation,[1] and, besides, the enemy always undertakes to turn against himself the forces of sentiment and idealism that persist in his favour. If Mr. Morel and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald are sincere (and we should assume that they are), if they have not lost all power of feeling through their determination to prove themselves right, how do they react to the crimes committed in Armenia by those whom Germany has let loose and whom she directs? What did they feel when they heard of the murder of Miss Cavell? For such a crime there is no possible palliation. Whatever may be the letter of the military code invented by the enemy, and on which he bases his right, it is enough to remember what this noble woman represented, her lofty and modest behaviour in the presence of death, her last whispered words of Christian charity and forgiveness—it is enough to look at that clear-cut, self-restrained, kind and brave face, which incarnates all that is best in a people and the essence of a civilisation, to execrate such a deed, carried out in cold blood, with judicial form, by representatives of the German Government,

[1] A distinguished member of the House of Lords, who, in the autumn of 1915, spoke in favour of peace, had written in 1913: "Time will show that the Germans have no aggressive designs, and fools will then stop talking about a war which will never take place."

who sought to prevent the possible intervention of neutrals by their lies and their cunning. Not only do such crimes as these deprive those leaders who in England are called "pro-Germans" of their followers, but it seems that they must rouse and turn against Germany that humanitarian sensitiveness which, through hatred of war and militarism, has done so much to help the designs of those Prussian militarists who are responsible for the war.

It seems . . . But when it is a question of leaders, bound by their creeds and thus compelled to a certain attitude, one never can tell. At the end of November the horror of conscription, on which the Government seemed to have decided unless Lord Derby's experiment should prove a success, induced them to break the cautious silence which for some time they had maintained. But the people no longer tolerates their pacific demonstrations, and this they learn at their expense.[1] But their usual public, on the contrary, free to change its opinion, and open to the lesson of facts, deserts them more and more. A month after the shocking affair at Brussels, it will be seen, at the Merthyr election, that their followers have left them.

III

And again, upon the workmen, little given in this country to dreams or philosophy, pacifism, properly so called, never had any strong hold. By

[1] Meeting at the Memorial Hall under the auspices of the U.D.C. (Nov. 29th). Similar fiascos took place in the provinces.

temperament, besides, they are combative, and enjoy a dogged contest with closed mouth; they are fighters. Once the real nature of the enemy, of the war and of the public peril, becomes clear to them they will enlist; they did enlist by hundreds of thousands; and those who are already at the front have shown how they can attack, and hold their trenches. But the majority began by not understanding, especially those of the West, where the coast is not exposed to German raids. For a very long time they saw nothing in the war but the "passing phase" of which one of their representatives spoke. They scarcely distinguished it from those colonial wars which England always ends so successfully, and which in their opinion result in enriching army contractors, in opening up new fields of enterprise to capitalists, and increasing the Empire, without increasing wages for any length of time. They are honest, they have a very strong sense of right and wrong; but their mental vision is limited to their experience, to their own peculiar and immediate surroundings, to their trades-unions and their strikes: they do not easily change their ideas. Such is in England the general psychology of the more numerous—that is to say, of the more ignorant, whose opinion is the governing force, and whom it is necessary, in order that the country may adapt itself to the danger, to instruct and persuade—which requires time. Nothing has come to them of all those translations of Treitschke, Bernhardi, and other pan-Germanists, which enlightened almost at once another section of the public as to the real meaning of the war—of this

war of nations, of which a man of their standard of culture, an honest soldier of the regular army, was heard to say with a shrug: "When we've pounded these Johnnies I suppose we'll give 'em 'Ome Rule, same as we did the Boers."

Now those who did not understand are those who remained behind; and we should not forget this when considering the too prolonged indifference, in certain regions, of the working-class to the country's need, worse still some of their actions which ran counter to measures of organisation—when we consider also their occasional wilful delays and the irregularity of their labour. For those who did not understand, and who remained behind, are too often those who, morally and intellectually, are worth least. It is a fact that, from the beginning, the appeal to conscience (and this drawback, amongst a hundred others of voluntary service, was one of the earliest to be seen) acted especially on the most conscientious, and consequently on the most sober, the most faithful and attentive to their technical duties: in fact, many of these enlisted in the first days of the war, who had to be sent back to the factory. Inferior workmen took their places, semi-skilled and unskilled—often unreliable workmen, drunkards, only intermittently employed until then, but to whom the masters, in those days of increased orders and decreased labour, offered amazing wages: an exciting piece of luck, certain to send the intemperate to the public house. We know how much Mr. Lloyd George believed this to be a reason of the early failures of the industrial effort.

Other results of this survival of the unfit were not less disastrous; at the moment when the national war ought to have united all classes and turned all minds in one direction, by an indirect effect of the war itself, the chronic struggle between masters and workmen, and more generally speaking, between capital and labour, had become keener. For those who remained behind and did not understand, the chief enemy now—an enemy more disliked than ever—was the master and the shareholder, enriched by the enormous orders of the British and Allied Governments; it was forgotten that wages had increased as well as profits. The fact is that by an effect of the new state of things—vast State loans, allowances to soldiers' dependants, Government control of railways—the Socialist dream has assumed more glowing and exciting colours: in fact, those whom it inspires hope that, by the time peace comes, it will have been completely realised as a result of the war. Meanwhile, the main thing was to push vigorously the fight against the masters, to abandon none of the earlier conquests, and, the logic of self-interest prevailing over the logic of ideas, to resist the new law which, under the pretence of national defence, suspended in certain establishments the rights and powers of the trade unions—as it suspended also the liberty of the masters.[1]

[1] Manifestoes of the *Trade Union Rights Committee*, established in London after the passing of the Munitions Act, to oppose the application of this Act. In the so-called "controlled" establishments, the profits of the shareholders and owners are limited to the average of the three years antecedent to the war, increased by 20 per cent. With regard to the rise of wages brought

But this movement had not waited for the Munitions Act. During the early disturbance of trade conditions caused by the war, under the influence, especially, of the idea that the shareholders' profits were too high, strikes had taken place which threatened the country's powers of defence. We remember that of the Clyde dockyards (February 1915), when 20,000 engineers suspended work. On the intervention of a special State commission,[1] founded in the course of the war to deal with such cases, they resumed work, but only in appearance (*ca' canny work*), applying in a literal sense the rules of their unions, which deliberately restrict speed of production. Observe that they were not supported by their representatives, who belong to that class of skilled workmen which, at the beginning, gave but too many volunteers to the army: such, even, was the disagreement in these Clyde strikes, between the members of the union and their representatives, that the latter had to resign. In the same way, before the crisis in May, the presidents of thirty-five unions, summoned to confer with the Government,

about by the enormous orders of the State, and the gradual diminution of the workers as enlistments increased, the *Leeds Co-operative Record* has given interesting statistics. In the shops of the Industrial Co-operative Society of this town, where 50,000 workmen obtain their provisions, purchases are seen, if the statistics of the first three months of 1914 be compared with those of 1915, to rise by 15 to 86 per cent., according to the kind of goods. Purchases of jewellery rose 65 per cent. In the north of England a good factory hand, says Mr. R. Radcliffe (*English Review*, January 1916), can make since the beginning of the war £10 a week. That is why the Government has dared to establish new taxes on food.

[1] Committee of Production.

which felt already concerned at the slowness and irregularity of production, undertook to give up during the war the right to strike and agreed to suspend the rules which delayed work. It was because the ordinary members would not be bound by this pledge that it was necessary, in June, to have recourse to the Munitions Act. But for a long time yet the situation remained the same: no sooner was the law passed than it immediately met with resistance; committees were formed for the defence of the trades unions against all legislation intended to diminish or abolish their activity and their rights. In the view of the workmen, it was the charter of their class, slowly and laboriously won, which they now had to defend against the encroachments of the State, and they did it with the same determined sense of duty as, of old, the House of Commons when it was up against the tyrannies of the Tudors and Stuarts. In June and July, in those Welsh coal-fields, where 60,000 miners had voluntarily enlisted as soldiers, two great strikes, in rapid succession (the second undertaken against the advice, and contrary to the promises of the union representatives, and in spite of the efforts and offers of the Board of Trade), warned the new Government that they must put off any project of conscription, and that such a law, if the attempt were made to apply it then, would provoke riots. And not only did the miners refuse to recognise the recent act, which was to keep them to their work; but, asserting their ancient right to strike, they declared their intention at once to make

use of it in order to obtain a rise of 20 per cent. in their wages; and the State, which thought to intervene and apply against them the new powers with which it had been armed, had finally to help them to obtain the half of their demand; that is to say, what they were asking before the war. In vain did the Government publish the recent Royal Proclamation forbidding controlled industries to strike, in vain did it try to apply the compulsory arbitration, advised by the union officials and required by the law. The law remained a dead letter. After this experience no further attempt has been made, in any similar case, to apply the legal fines and restraints, no matter how much the army may have suffered from such strikes. Nearly two months later, at Bristol (September 9th), at the Trades Union Congress, Mr. Lloyd George is still engaged in proving that the manufacture of shells and guns must be accelerated. He is challenged to prove, what his audience seem to regard as much more important, that the State has kept its promise "to intercept, in the controlled establishments, all excessive profits of the masters." He proves it by documentary evidence. But there is no further mention of the legal penalties directed against the wage-earners and their unions. There is no further effort at persuasion, except the usual appeal to their sense of right and wrong. Documentary evidence is put before them to show that the State is strictly observing the contract made with the trades unions, but that the latter often fail to do so. For example, at a time when 80,000 skilled workmen

and 200,000 labourers are required in the armament works, the engineers, at Woolwich Arsenal, still continue to obstruct the employment of unskilled men; in certain factories of Wales, the local committee of the union will not allow them to touch a lathe; in one particular factory for making machine tools, the same prohibition applies to women; in the arsenals of Enfield, Coventry and Woolwich, men who work too quickly are treated as blacklegs. In short, the unions are shown that by their "rules and *customs*" (Mr. Lloyd George's own words: and how well they help us to understand the peculiar point of view of these workmen—indeed, of these trade guilds of England!), they are restraining and hampering the fighting power of the country.[1]

By September, however, the workmen began to understand. The Union officials, in discussion with Mr. Lloyd George, far from insisting, as they surely would have done at the time of the Welsh strikes, on defending the principle of the

[1] One of the chief objects of solicitude on the part of the trade unions is to prevent what has been called *dilution of labour*—the admission of unskilled men and women to work along with the skilled.

Shortly after his speech at Bristol, Mr. Lloyd George quoted this curious letter as one which had been sent to the members of a union at Coventry by the secretary of the committee: "Comrades, please note that C. Hewit began at 7 p.m. to finish a bracket and to fix a breech bracket on a 4·5 mortar, and that he will probably have done by 5 o'clock in the morning, which means 8½ hours for a 31½ hours' job. It is not the first time that complaints have been addressed to me with regard to this man, who is working at more than double time, for which I cannot find if he has been booked. I should be glad if members would take a minute to look at him." Two months later the trade unions disputed the authenticity of this letter.

actions complained of, began basing their defence on denials, or assertions of the exceptional nature of the case; and, when at a meeting he proved the truth of his charges by documentary evidence, and called on them to use all their influence and power against such scandals, they actually cheered him. By September, in fact, the idea of England's danger and of an Englishman's duty had at last reached this social sphere, and aroused there the determination to fight and win the war. Of the silent progress of this feeling there was a striking demonstration six weeks later. In the heart of Wales, an election was held at Merthyr, a stronghold of the Labour Party and of that extreme Syndicalism of which Mr. Keir Hardie has so long carried the flag. Helped by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the eloquent pacifist, and by Mr. Henderson, the Labour member of the Cabinet, the Independent Labour Party had at its disposal all the resources of money and organisation to secure the return of its candidate, who was at once a local leader, and president of a great federation of miners. Well, amongst these very miners, the man who was elected by an enormous majority was, contrary to all expectations, the war candidate, a free lance, who had declared himself ready to vote for "double conscription, if it's necessary to win the war."

Such a fact was a revelation of the change accomplished, and the Labour minister, Mr. Henderson, who took part in the campaign against the new member, saw this so clearly that from that moment he became a supporter of the Conscription Bill the

Government was then beginning to prepare. But generally, amongst the union officials, amongst the delegates to the Trade Union Congress, even amongst those who, as we have seen, declined to support strikes, and must therefore tacitly recognise the utility of the special war legislation, conversion is less apparent; it is accompanied by reserves and even some backsliding. What they reserve, what they will repeatedly reassert, are the principles, the full principles, of the party. In order to understand the apparent contradictions which, even after Mr. Stanton's election, are so puzzling to the observer, one must take into account the mystical worship of formulas, of those dogmas, for which a party man is ever ready to fight as a soldier for his flag. One must bear in mind also that these leaders and delegates, who were elected for the most part long before the Merthyr election, are naturally unwilling to eat their own words. In fact, one must take into account simple human self-respect. This goes far to explain the success of Mr. Lloyd George. If these professed anti-militarists are willing to listen to him, it is largely because they cannot suspect him of thinking: "I told you so." They remember his disbelief in the German menace, his sarcasms at the war prophets who advised the country to arm: hence the confidence with which they now listen to him. One of their countrymen, who knows them well, thus summed up this psychology: "If we were wrong, they'll say, so was he!" But don't expect them to acknowledge in a "resolution" that they were wrong.

They don't know, like their more adroit French comrades, how to veil the contradiction between the abstract principle which they will once more assert and the particular measure which they perceive to be necessary. They will contradict themselves openly; in the very same sitting of the very same congress, one of their votes will refer to the principle, and the other to the existing situation, which demands conscription to secure victory. The foreigner may wonder at such inconsistency, but one thing was made clear by that Merthyr election in November: the workpeople have at last understood, and are resolved on a fight to a finish, even at the price of conscription. At last they are at one with the general movement of the country. In a word, England is now going to wage a *national* war—perhaps the first in all her history.[1]

IV

Towards the end of 1915 nothing else is talked of in England but conscription. To these workmen it is the greatest sacrifice, that of their liberty—in their eyes the fundamental condition of their human dignity. Because their fighting instincts are now turned against Germany, because they are bent on "winning the war," they accept it; but only if it is made clear to them that there is no other path to victory and, after complete proof, that the appeal to conscience will not suffice

[1] See Appendix D.

to raise the necessary numbers. It will suffice, they have been and still are assured by the Liberals, Radicals, and Socialists, by all those whose political philosophy is based on an optimistic faith in the natural goodness of man, in the supreme powers of conscience and reason; and the keener these opponents of conscription are, the more desperately do they desire to make it appear useless by showing all that can be done by the appeal to conscience. It is therefore the men of the most advanced opinions (excluding always the militant pacifists, those members of the old Radical Cabinet who resigned at the beginning of the war, the friends of Mr. Morel, the readers of the *Labour Leader*, and the stalwarts of the *Independent Labour Party*), it is these advanced spirits, from the ordinary Radicals to the trade-union officials, who now more and more undertake to push on the recruiting campaign. For some months already Labour leaders had been active in this direction; I refer to those who, at the end of May, founded the *Socialist Committee for National Defence*, and who had several times received confidential information from the Government. They had been told, for instance, at the beginning of the summer, that the higher classes having given all their sons, conscription could no longer be avoided unless a spontaneous movement on the part of the workmen raised the rate of enlistment. This information was repeated at the beginning of the autumn, when Lord Derby's system was about to be applied. Mr. Lloyd George said that the number

of recruits coming in must make up for the Russian retreat.[1] In the spring of 1916 England must have new armies at her disposal. To this end 30,000 recruits a week must at once be got. If the leaders of the working classes wish to avoid conscription they must do their best to find these recruits, and they are given till November 30th to show what they can do with the voluntary system. Thereupon, Messrs. Hodge, Barnes, Crooks and Ben Tillett set to work again; trade-union delegates are taken once more on trips to the front; are shown the trenches and battlefields; talk with officers and men; come back provided with facts and documents: There are not even yet enough shells and bombs; the soldiers are dying for lack of ammunition—dying for eighteenpence a day, with a curse on their lips for those comrades who, in the factories, are receiving a wage of six to eight shillings for a slack day's work. The losses every week are such and such, the gaps must be filled up, or the line abandoned; they must be much more than merely filled up, if any advance is to be made; and they add this argument, which says a great deal as to the ignorance of a sovereign people which needs to see and touch in order to believe, as to the paradox, at least in war-time, of the democratic principle of government by public opinion: "Yes, it is absolutely true; we have seen it with our own eyes: in France, all fit men are soldiers; in town and country alike we have seen no civilians but the women, children and old men. We insist on

[1] *Through Terror to Triumph* (September 1915).

this because we know that many of our comrades do not believe it, and several of ourselves did not believe it when we left England." [1] As a result of this new organised effort at persuasion, the weekly average of recruits rises — some enlisting to bear arms and serve their king in the fighting line for eighteenpence a day; others at their own sweet will, because they like fighting less or money more, enlisting for home service in those new industrial khaki regiments, where, it is true, the workmen's charter is suspended, but where wages are those of peace time, and even much higher for extra time and work. There remains that interesting residue of those, whose dislike of work almost equals their natural horror of fighting, and who prefer to smoke their cigarettes outside their public-houses. In short, the higher the man's moral worth, the harder his lot, and the best alone are sent to the firing line.

This is an injustice and a danger; it is the essential defect in the system, that from which all the others spring. The longer the system was applied the more obvious did this defect become, till it could be no more accepted by this English conscience which had meant to appeal to nothing but conscience. It is the very success of the system which reveals its inherent flaw. By November 1915 all the men of spirit, all those who make for the nobleness and worth of a country,

[1] I quote this from memory. But compare the almost identical report of the deputation of Manchester war workers published in the papers in September.

have enlisted, after which the struggle against conscription favours but a morally inferior minority —the "*slackers*." From this time on it is the indolence, the indifference, or the selfishness of this minority—which is certainly not England—that is being defended by the resolve to defend the principles of England; it is for the "slackers'" sake that the country foregoes the decisive advantage which she would derive from a fighting machine concentrating all the forces of the nation and all its available human material. And, worse still, if the inferior minority, who are deaf to the appeals of conscience, are not yet England, they threaten one day to become England, through the survival of the unfit that must ensue upon the spontaneous self-sacrifice of the conscientious.

The system is seen, then, to be not merely unjust, but harmful in its outcome. All the same, it is the injustice which causes the obvious and immediate difficulty. For instance, for young bachelors of twenty and twenty-five to remain peacefully smoking their cigarettes in the streets, whilst heads of families are risking death, is evidently unjust; but it also involves extra expense to the State, for every unmarried soldier costs only eighteenpence a day and his keep, whilst in the case of each married volunteer a wife and almost always several children must be provided for. It was calculated in the month of August that three men who had enlisted in London on the same day, were leaving altogether twenty-six persons to be supported by the State. Not only,

then for a moral reason should compulsory service, if established, be enforced first of all on bachelors. The voluntary system has other defects still more injurious to the successful conduct of the war. Not only is the number of recruits smaller than it might be, but who can foretell what this number will be to-morrow, or six months hence? Impossible to estimate and prepare the necessary equipment and the adequate lists of instructors and officers: this became clear in the first months of the war. Such was then the sudden rush of volunteers, that for lack of enough buildings, uniforms, guns, and instructors many had to be refused. The men were discouraged; the idea spread that no more men were wanted, and the next appeal met with a poor response; it was necessary to resort to new propaganda. Then there was another difficulty, leading to another kind of confusion: A man would often enlist for a particular corps or a particular service only. A chief engineer, priceless in the workshop, would insist on going to the firing line; an unskilled mechanic would prefer to serve at home in a factory. Finally, for lack of the numbers of fighting men which conscription would give, the State, as the war extends and the need of soldiers increases, ends by taking all who offer themselves, even boys and weaklings, who quickly sink to the hospital and are finally dismissed. Time was required to reveal all these defects, some of them clearly immoral, of a system which owes all its prestige to its appearance of superior morality, and the force of tradition.

The nation, too, was gradually beginning to see

the matter from a different angle. As more and more men enlisted, as hundreds of thousands became millions, the country's centre of gravity and the focus of public opinion shifted. Long before the end of 1915 they were no longer in a civilian population, which had parted with nothing of its liberty, that was menaced by conscription. They were in that part of the people which had offered itself for national service; in those legions of soldiers who had staked their lives, in all those families which had resigned themselves to the sacrifice of their sons. For all such, and for the ideal which inspires them, conscription would act, bringing reinforcement to those true Englishmen who had freely risen to defend the Empire, helping them to victory. Among all who have submitted to military discipline, or seen their sons or brothers submit to it, the opinion—an opinion more or less clearly expressed, but growing stronger every day—is that individualism and liberty are ideas valid only in times of peace and safety; they feel that in the face of the enemy, every man belongs to that England which is gathering herself together for the fight; that, in fine, military service is due for defence of king and country, that king and country have the right to demand it—a right not only moral, but legal and constitutional, as, towards the end of the year a score of pamphlets, articles and speeches of the conscriptionists have undertaken to show.

For at last an attack is being made on the root argument of their opponents, on that argument which, in this land of tradition, seemed unassailable,

and has been raised by the pure democrats, the advocates of the new socialistic idea—a paradox peculiarly English—into a dogma of their creed. No, say the conscriptionists, the authority of precedent, to which you appeal, is not on your side, but against you. Compulsory service has been a principle of the Constitution from time immemorial! Thereupon the discussion plunges into the dusty and sacred vaults of the remote past. Charters, Saxon and Norman chronicles, forgotten texts from the Statute Book are unearthed to prove King George the Fifth's ancient and imprescriptible right to the military service of all his male subjects. Right back they go to the times of Ælfric and Harold, to the *landfyrd*, or county levies summoned by the Witenagemot, to the *Assize of Arms* of 1181, to the *posse comitatus* of Henry II, to the trained bands or militia of James I, to the Statutes of the Restoration (13 and 14 Car. II) which transferred from the Sheriff to the Crown the right of calling out this militia—to that other act of Parliament which, under Victoria, in 1865 (34 and 35 Vict. cap. 86) suspended this right for one year only, a suspension automatically repeated every year, so that, though the right has never been acted on since Waterloo, it still remains legally intact.[1] The occult and latent manner of its survival makes it only the more sacred, sacred as some inscription in runic

[1] "Compulsory Service as a Principle of the Constitution," Henry Blake in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1915. Numerous letters in the papers appealed to historic arguments. In the Battle of Waterloo county militia, raised by *tirage au sort*, took part.

letters, on the tomb of a Saxon king, in the crypt of Westminster; like those almost obliterated words, it is linked with the dim and hidden foundations of an august, mysterious structure, overflowing with memories and the magic of the past—the Constitution of England.

Such is the historic right of the monarch to summon the free men of his counties to the defence of England. How moving is the imperious brevity of this appeal, how serious and fine—say the supporters of compulsion—compared with the noisy, gaudy methods of recruiting, the Barnum posters and clap-trap, the endless hubbub of voices that assail, entreat, cajole mothers, sweethearts and wives! For to that the English voluntary system has finally degenerated, this is the impression it produces on worn-out imaginations, after fifteen months of propaganda, speeches, and advertising: a never-ending agitation and babble, ruinous to English dignity in the eyes of foreigners. Irregular in its effects, ill-adapted to the necessities of organisation and prevision, the voluntary system is finally attacked as the reverse of a system; moreover—so they say—all voluntary element has now disappeared from it. No doubt, in the early months, and we may say throughout the whole of the first year of the war, it was private reflection, the silent and personal impulse to duty, which decided the men to enrol themselves. The great majority of the army, two or three million, enlisted thus. Such a thing had never been seen and would not have been thought possible: it is one of the finest collective acts of a nation on record.

But all the same, this great tale of the conscientious came to an end at last, and then those who had shirked the recruiting office came more and more to be looked on as an inferior class, with whom one might take liberties. How much was now left to them of that private and guarded domain of freedom and conscience which no one is supposed to enter? Recruiting agents, volunteer *canvassers*, clergymen, neighbours and their wives, local notabilities—a clamorous throng pours its invasions into this desecrated retreat, urging, forcing the shirker to take the pledge, no longer content with taking what once would have seemed the liberty of putting a question on such a private matter, or daring to offer unsolicited advice. Intimidation, well-nigh compulsion, are now used; humiliating and unjustifiable, exerted as they are by a casual stranger, and not by the State. Life has become unbearable to the man who still takes the word " voluntary " in its literal sense, and still fancies he has the right to refuse. The rector or squire of his village asks the reason of his abstention, his employer threatens to dismiss him, his sweetheart to throw him over, his lady-friends cut him, others, whom he has never seen, present him in the street with that English symbol of cowardice —a white feather. What now of the sacred principle, in whose name, for all its illogical injustice, the country refused to change a system which kept it in a state of military inferiority? Only a word is left, and the most clear-sighted and sincere of the Radicals, those staunch enemies of conscription, perceive this plainly enough, and end either in

supporting, or at least tolerating, the idea of compulsory service—talking no longer of principle but of expediency, and accepting beforehand what the Government, the only competent judge of the necessity, decides. "*If it must be, it must.*"

But, for the masses, never given to analysis, a word, even when it no longer corresponds to reality, may remain all-powerful—a stimulus to feeling and to action, like some dogma, which can inspire fanaticism, even when it means nothing to the brain. This essential power of words and signs, and in a more general sense, of appearances and forms, even after the whole substance of their contents has vanished or changed, the English have always intuitively and dumbly understood. Instinctively they respect this power; more, they know how to turn it to account, with that innate and deep-lying sense of life and its irrational processes which makes them so indifferent to logic. Hence some of the most striking and familiar peculiarities of England, of her manners and her Constitution. Take, for instance, her practically republican form of government, her democratic institutions, and yet the almost religious worship of the king, the maintenance round his name and person of a mediæval system of formulas, ceremonies and institutions, such as the presence of that magic symbol, the royal mace, in the house of an all-powerful Parliament. Or, again, the fact that the Anglican Church, which insists on styling itself the Holy Catholic Church, is quite determined to remain Anglican. Or yet again, see how the Broad Church has introduced into the jealously

preserved Christian rites and words, quite new meanings—agnostic, rationalist, even pantheistic. This people always wants its new wine in the old bottles, and with the old labels. Examples are innumerable: sufficient to recall here how ancient, deep-rooted and peculiar to England is this tendency.

This national trait it is which affords the means of solving, in true English fashion, what would seem, *a priori*, an insoluble problem: how to impose military service on men who regard it as the most humiliating slavery, and who are not to be coerced. A good enough working solution—the English do not insist on theoretical precision—was found by Lord Derby, who was forthwith commissioned to put it into application. It was *voluntary compulsory service*. What does the English mind care about the absurdity of such a conception *if it works*, as they say, if it gives practical results? Voluntary enlistment, so called, had in fact already become almost compulsory through the pressure of opinion, through the application of well-nigh irresistible influences to all who hesitated or refused. It only remained for the State, following the lead of the general public, to assume over the shirkers certain final rights and powers unrecognised by any statute of the written Constitution, even contrary to the spirit of the unwritten Constitution. Observe that great care was taken not to assert these rights, and provoke the defenders of ancient liberties and traditions by proclaiming a new principle: the English, when aiming at

practical ends, instinctively feel the danger and futility of exciting passions by setting up a new principle against an old. It is by a silent and gradual pressure that the State, in its want of soldiers, attempts to extend its powers, assuming no direct responsibility, taking care not to commit itself, simply authorising provisionally a certain private citizen, Lord Derby, until then quite unconnected with the Government, to exploit a certain private idea of his own, a patent system of which he is the inventor. As a rule, in England, the man who directs a public movement, *the man in charge* really does direct it, choosing in all freedom his ways and means, taking all initiative and responsibility; so Lord Derby, now Director of Recruiting, personally applies his system, making public speeches—the other day he was addressing the Stock Exchange (November 24)—writing public letters to the papers, and private letters to every man who is expected to enlist, answering all the questions that turn up, deciding everything, inventing methods, superintending the new and very complex organisation, the detailed application of which he delegates to voluntary local committees.[1]

[1] Many other examples of the same method could be quoted. The English do not speak of the censor*ship*, but of the censor. In time of peace, when the *Defence of the Realm Act* is not in existence, the censor is an official who, with the help of a few secretaries, passes final judgment on the morality of plays, and decides what omissions must be made. In the same way at boxing and football matches, which are followed by a large public with passionate interest, and on which thousands of pounds are often staked, there is but a single referee (in such cases it has been found necessary in France to divide the responsibility).

The starting point of the new system was the National Register, drawn up in July, the chief object of which had been to prepare State control over the individual, by instilling into his mind the idea that the community has a right to the service of each of its members and that such service may be exacted. From this huge catalogue the local committees extracted the names and addresses of all those of military age, and transcribed them in special lists (*pink forms*). They form a class apart; the State has not seized them, but the State is watching them, and its attitude clearly reveals its purpose. Still, the class of men who are wanted is not yet sufficiently defined. For the fact is generally known that the Government does not want to stop all the manufactures of the country; it wishes England to go on as long as possible producing and exporting the goods which will enable her to meet her financial obligations—greater than those of the other belligerents and further increased by loans to her Allies. It is, therefore, easy for a man who does not want to enter the army to persuade himself that he is supporting, more or less directly, one of these indispensable industries. So Lord Derby adopts

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Lastly, the solitary and supreme authority of the judge in England is well known.

One may wonder that in a free country such power should be granted to single individuals; but the fact can be explained by general habits of mind, which may be traced to a commercial and puritan origin. It saves time and money to *commit* the direction of, and the responsibility for, any business, to a single well chosen and reliable man. Also the authority of the referee, the censor, or the judge is accepted because they embody the idea of law which the instinct of order perceives to be necessary.

the plan of marking by a star placed against their names those who are more useful in their offices or workshops than at the war, the result, of course, being that the others feel themselves more clearly pointed at than ever. He goes further by providing with an armlet all those who have passed through the recruiting office, as a visible sign of their accomplished duty, and a protection against public censure—which is thereby drawn down on those who do not wear an armlet. More significant still—for here the compulsory nature of the system first clearly shows itself—special courts are created to decide without appeal who are entitled to be "starred"; and often masters are seen appealing for permission to keep a clerk or workman on the plea that he cannot be spared. Thus, for every Englishman from eighteen to forty, Nelson's order, so often quoted, takes on an ever more imperious meaning. It is no longer: "England expects that every man will do his duty," but England requests every man to do his duty; and the summons is soon so strongly expressed, so insistently repeated, that no one any longer feels free to neglect it, and a stronger will is required to stand back than to enlist. Hitherto the Government had left everything to the propagandist societies and committees; now it speaks, urges, threatens, foreshadowing drastic action, and the peculiar tone of its language shows clearly what sort of men it is addressing—the so-called *shirkers* and *slackers*, who, now that all brave men have enlisted, are almost looked upon as defaulters. "If you are not ready to march," says Lord Kitchener in

very plain words, "until you are made to, where is the merit of that? where is the patriotism? Are you going to wait to do your duty until you are fetched?" What a difference between such language, which almost threatens, and the simple, quiet words which, last May, placed without comment the need before the country, leaving each man to judge and decide for himself!

Almost at once, to increase the pressure, the demand becomes more personal, not in the figurative fashion of posters and speeches, which aimed at giving each man the feeling that he was being personally addressed, but actually, unceremoniously calling him by his own name, hunting him up at home, pursuing and worrying him in his private life. First of all comes a private letter signed by Lord Derby, delivered at the man's house, to impress on him a rigid, simple conception of duty, and dispel beforehand all illusory excuse by obliging him to put to himself this catechism: "Am I doing all I can for my country? Would the reason which I am giving for abstention be considered valid in a country where there is universal service?" After this comes an attempt to force a decision by notifying the date after which choice will no longer rest with him; for though enlistment is still supposed to be voluntary, he is warned that if he does not enlist he will at a very early date "be fetched." Whereupon the door bell rings, and the *canvasser* enters, sent by the local voluntary Recruiting Committee. Like the members of the committee itself, these visitors are usually local notabilities, above military age: municipal coun-

cillors, clergymen, dissenting ministers, merchants, manufacturers, presidents and secretaries of trade unions, workmen, election agents of both parties, officials of political and private societies—and each makes a point of calling on those men whom he knows more or less closely, and who are supposed to be open to the visitor's influence, for the whole process is direct, living and human. If the man is not at home, the orders are to keep on coming until he is found, to tackle him by asking and discussing the reasons of his resistance, by talking to him of allowances and pensions, after which, if the result is negative, a fresh start is to be made, this time indirectly, by trying to put pressure upon him through his family, his friends, or his employer. This employer is sometimes the head of a government department. In that case he has not waited to act. The French newspapers published the letter, courteous but stiff, of scarcely disguised sternness, and very personal in its tone, which the Postmaster General addressed to each member of his staff, warning him that unless he enlisted, he could no longer rely on keeping his situation.[1]

[1] Here is this very significant document: "Your name has been given me as that of a man of military age, with whose services the department could dispense for the benefit of the army. If you are physically capable of bearing arms you should enlist. The members of the regular staff of my department who have answered the appeal to the nation must not see their places occupied by others, as fit as themselves, to serve the country. I cannot, therefore, guarantee you your situation in my department. The necessity of new recruits is imperious. Many of you are saying: 'I will wait until the Government says it wants me; and then I will go.' In the name of the Government I tell you now that you are wanted and I ask you to go to the front" (November 13th).

Finally, a list is drawn up of the decidedly intractable, which looks very much like a roll of dishonour and those who base their refusal on religious reasons, as in Russia the Doukhobors, are in a truly pitiable position.[1] In the presence of such proceedings, one can understand the exclamation of a speaker at a meeting of the No-Conscription Fellowship. "Better," he cried, "legal compulsion!"—to which, of course, an Englishman can always, if it be a question of defending his conscience, honourably offer passive resistance. Yes, the heavy hand of the policeman, prison itself where a conscientious objector can assume—like those in old times who refused to pay ship money—the halo of sacrifice and almost of martyrdom, are better than this continual, nameless persecution, which, whilst pretending to respect your liberty, tries to damage your character. Besides, the man feels that, in fact, he is already no longer free; he has but the choice between an act which they still deign to call voluntary, and an act which will be exacted from him in a few months, or weeks, by the law, and in case of refusal, by the police. At the end of November, the State feels so sure of its right to the person of every fit man for the defence of the country—a right, mark you, not yet put forward by statute, and is so certain of public opinion, that it takes that right tacitly for granted, at least in the case of the unmarried men, by suddenly forbidding them to leave the country.

[1] The Archbishop of Canterbury asked that the clergy of his denomination should not be included in this list, and his request was granted.

Till that moment appearances had been preserved, and it could still be said that only a voluntary act had been requested with greater and greater urgency. Theoretically, at all events, "liberty of the subject" was still intact. But when policemen prevent Englishmen from boarding a steamer bound for a foreign port, conscription or no, a new principle is being applied—a new epoch begins in the history of this nation.

That last measure affected only the unmarried men. The fact is that, by these essentially English methods which respected familiar forms and formulas, whilst emptying them of their ancient contents in order to fill them cautiously with an opposite meaning, solutions were being arrived at, no less peculiarly English—solutions, that is, fragmentary, special to the case, and in the nature of a compromise—solutions in which the new principle is present, but hardly expressed, laying no claim to absolute truth, and thus avoiding challenge to the defenders of the old principle. Conscription—perhaps; but first only for this limited class; or, later on, indirect compulsion, through the intervention of the local authorities, such as requisition of a certain number of soldiers from every town and country, on the supposed authority of obsolete laws suddenly unearthed; or, finally, in Ireland, where opposition is known to be pretty general, conscription for one province only, Ulster, for instance, of English blood and Protestant faith, whose good example the Nationalist and Catholic counties will be sure to follow. Whatever the final

solution, every means has now been taken to cover up the tracks of the coming revolution. It is now well on the way; but if Lord Derby's effort fails, the enacting of conscription will only sanction an already established order, and translate into a legal formula an acquired habit. But that formula itself will be avoided as long as ever it can be. For instinctively England hides her revolutionary changes under the forms of evolution.[1]

V

Of all such changes, none in all her history was ever so rapidly completed. It may have seemed slow to those who follow things from the outside, who only see the urgency, the necessity for immediate reform in order to meet the danger efficiently. But if we consider the force of the long-established tendencies which had to be overcome—immemorial habits based on a boasted national principle, and rooted in religion—if we remember the insularity of the English, the habitual fixity of form and tendency, as of a very old breed that has lived safely for ages in its closed and isolated environment—if we call to mind also the resistant powers of self-interest and prejudice, over which an

[1] Lord Derby's system was exactly a middle course between free enlistment and conscription. It was, in the literal sense of the words, voluntary censcription. By submitting to it, men place themselves in the same position as the young Frenchman who has to serve. They are at the disposal of the military authorities, divided into groups, which are called up, just like our classes in France, according to the need of the moment.

invisible danger had to prevail in order to rouse a people but little given to emotion and naturally impervious to everything but experience; if, I say, we realise all this, then we can, on the contrary, but marvel that changes so far-reaching, so opposed to the new social and political developments in which England was engaged, could have taken place in the course of a few months.

And we wonder still more, when we see by what methods—methods of liberty—such a change, directed against liberty, was achieved. It has come, that change, from the never-ceasing action of private initiative, from the harmonious co-operation of myriads of people. For instance, to form, sustain, and enlarge the stream which is constantly increasing the size of the army; to attract into it in continuous flood the necessary millions of separate drops; to seek out and drive on those who have resisted all earlier appeals and entreaties—to do all this the number of individuals and private societies who have kept on working for eighteen months, from one end of the country to the other, can scarcely be realised.

In this war, in which every nation reveals her innermost self, this is the specially English feature: everything springs from the principle of self-government—even the effort of those who aim at doing away with self-government by subjecting every Englishman to the authorities who are carrying on the war. Since August 4th, 1914, England has been, practically and without intermission, in the state that she gets into periodically, before her General Elections. Speeches, discussions, pro-

cessions, meetings, advertisements of every kind, unceasing activity on the part of citizens who are not, as in other countries, political specialists or agents of a State department engaged in "working" elections, but purely and simply the citizens, the men and women of England, moved by the ideas that have taken hold of them—ideas expressed by each man in the street who jumps on a chair in a public square to address the crowd, no less than by a Cabinet Minister who, but yesterday, was touring England to convert refractory workmen. The issue is England herself—as Mr. Lloyd George said to the workmen and employers at Manchester, that England which is the property of every Englishman, in the government, the danger and safety of which, every Englishman is personally interested. In order to speed up the recruiting movement all over the country, Lord Derby follows the same methods as Mr. Lloyd George pursued when he had to increase the production of munitions. He consults with the Parliamentary and Labour Recruiting Committees, brings forward a scheme of organisation with local committees, canvassers, inspectors, town and district tribunals, central courts of appeal. Along these general lines, everything spontaneously arranges, co-ordinates itself, and gets into action, evolved from the very depths of the nation, representing freely and completely all her various elements: Radicals and Conservatives, gentlemen and small shopkeepers, great manufacturers and plain working men. Under Lord Derby, Director-General of Recruiting, there are, of course, local directors, but their authority, like

his, is purely moral. Everything is free and voluntary, everything is spontaneous like life itself. From the main recruiting committees sub-committees will sprout—the normal mode of growth for societies, clubs, leagues, unions, chapels, groups and bodies innumerable—which spread their ramifications over the whole country and gradually develop according to the successive impulses that emerge from and modify the original idea. This is the instinctive and peculiar activity of the Englishman, who does not feel really alive unless he is developing in this fashion; this it is which has for so long made England the classic country of free association. To undertake by oneself or in co-operation with others what is desired or needed, without direction from some higher, public, anonymous power, this is what an Englishman calls liberty—his special liberty as an Englishman. Such spontaneous activity, the main social force of the country, the Government knows how to stimulate and make use of for national purposes. To this nation—or, to be more accurate, to each of its individuals, for to each the words are spoken, and not to the community as a whole—the Government, on the day after the entry of Bulgaria into the war, addressed the following warning: "The military authorities will not hold themselves responsible for the issue of the war if the country does not provide them with another million men." It sounds rather like the call from a board of directors to their shareholders for a fresh supply of capital. Then comes the discussion as to ways, means and details: public debates in which the matter is considered and reconsidered in broad daylight,

constant exchange of views between the Government and the people, between some Minister and some association or union wishing to obtain a clear idea of the difficulties. Not a week but brings a conference between Mr. Lloyd George and the representatives of some Trade Union. On July 17th a deputation of ladies (probably former suffragettes), led by Mrs. Pankhurst, came to ask the enlistment of women as war workers. He expressed approval, offered to organise technical instruction for working women, and, speaking generally of the munition difficulty, told them that the chief obstacle to the production of shells on the necessary scale was the lack of machine tools, lathes and gauges, that he had just had a meeting with all the great manufacturers, and that such and such establishments were about to be placed under State control; in short, he acquainted them with his difficulties, experiments and plans. All these particulars were published in the evening papers. The same thing takes place every day: the Government gives information, stimulates and co-ordinates. It is for the country to will and give the collective effort whose mainspring is to be found in the free conscience of each individual citizen.

Individualism, freedom, conscience, we have often used these words: when speaking of this country one cannot avoid their constant recurrence. If it were possible to define the peculiar shades of meaning, the special and mutual relations of the ideas they express when applied to

the English, one would come very near the moral equation of England. To-day much more than formerly, one must take into account the omnipotence of a public opinion, quick to rise, spread, and rule, in a society which the progress of mechanical science tends to bind ever more closely together—a public opinion which represents the average spontaneous adjustment of individual minds, and not only sways the powers that be, but almost tyrannically compels to conformity each theoretically free and inviolable soul. We have already seen something of the conflict between the two principles: one, English, ancient, and mainly of religious origin, that throws the individual on to his own self and resources; the other, modern, that subjects him to the impulses and suggestions of his new town environment. The special feature of England is, that in that country both these principles are so strong. The whole story of the movement which gave England her new armies—from the first enthusiasm of the genuine volunteers, down to Lord Derby's experiment, down to the first Conscription Bill—has shown us the clash and intermingling thereof.

December 1915.[1]

[1] Note on the Law of Conscription, see Appendix E.

THUS, by methods as contrary to those of Germany as the minds and training of the two countries are different, the English effort at adaptation goes forward. To conceive its greatness, we must bear in mind the special circumstances of this nation, its secular security, its lack of experience for a great modern war, its deep-rooted dislike of innovation, its situation at the beginning of the struggle, with a military force inferior to that of a small Continental State. Only so can one see that the effort could develop but gradually, as the sensation of danger and attack slowly sank into the depths of the country's mind, and the idea of the necessary adjustment was at last conceived. It is not enough to present to this people such an idea from without: the English cannot be stirred or diverted from their habits by appeal to the intellect. Pure ideas have no effect on the English mind, which remains indifferent to their logic. That mind, evolved in isolation, cut off from foreign influences, has grown from nothing but its own past—a very long past, during which it has crystallised and become imbued with all those peculiarities which make an Englishman so different from every Continental. He has long

passed the age when change is possible; he has become the creature of his habits. In a crisis which necessitates adaptation to a sudden change of circumstance, he will seek for means of safety, not in those ideal and rational methods, logically adequate to the problem, open to minds of less arrested growth, but in his habits and experience.

Yet, however original England's answer to the problem, however great the part played by English temperament, that answer can after all be nothing but a more or less picturesque variant of the solution that logic demands. For, *a priori*, there is but one answer. After all, and in spite of all, to oppose efficiently the accuracy, the inhuman regularity, of a machine, one must change oneself into a machine —a machine of the same type as that which Germany has become in the hands of her Prussian masters precisely because she never was a naturally evolved and truly organic being. Now for England whose structure is not, like that of the enemy, the creation of will guided by logic, but a slowly and spontaneously evolved product of life: for England, whose general activities, born of the free competition of countless private enterprises, run chiefly on the lines of instinct and tradition, such a transformation is of all the most difficult. The citizens of a country in which the State has never directed anything must now be put under the control of that State; a people whose political, moral and religious principle has been for centuries self-government, must be subjected to a central authority, brought into the rigid framework of a military hierarchy. And all this must

be done, not by one of those long processes of evolution in the course of which an organic type may be completely changed, but in a few months, under pain of national death or degradation.

England has done it, is doing it, by turning to account the very principle which seemed likely to make it impossible. Self-Government: that is to say, habitual self-control, power to master one's impulses and one's appetites, in short, character, the outcome of three centuries of puritan culture and a system of education which has had for its main object the training of the will—character and the tradition of voluntary discipline. That is the living product of life, the long-developed habit, the peculiar and basic trait, which England is turning to account in order to adapt herself to her new circumstances, when it seemed that her very faithfulness to her own past would prevent her. Her self-discipline will take the place of laws prescribed, the bidding of her conscience serve for commands from without; the machine shall not be manufactured, but spring together from her inner impulses. For all this, one thing is necessary: the idea must rise and spread, rousing each individual will and moving it to co-operate with others. Because this has been for centuries the necessary condition of all things in their country, the English well know how to hasten such a process. But swift though the movement be, it cannot be instantaneous.

The organic, we have said, may be killed by the mechanical, if the attack be so sudden that there is no time to develop from within the means of defence. Germany, who through France was

aiming at England, came very near dealing her a fatal blow. If the march on Paris had succeeded, if France had been conquered, in a few years Germany, richer by our wealth, established on the coast, and mistress of the Continent, would soon have outrun any possible extension of the English fleet. At the Battle of the Marne, the fate of the world hung trembling in the balance; without doubt, the British Empire, too, was saved by that victory. To both England and France it gave *time*, essential to our ally as to ourselves. We had to perfect and bring our machine into working order, but she had to set hers up from the foundation, and lacking all central command, could set up nothing if the human material hung back. All England, to her very depths, has had to learn and understand, and resolve to come forward. The war had found her in ignorance and apathy; she knew nothing but herself, she hated nobody; she did not even know she had enemies, hardly knew the full meaning of that word. Perhaps, if Germany had fought her honourably, the great part of her people would not have yet quite understood. She might not have strained every nerve; might even have been willing to make a place for her opponent by her side on sea and land, by some cession of her colonial territory. Such proposals had been discussed. During the past ten years, those who governed and represented England had done their best to preserve the peace; nay, had been inspired by purest pacificism. All their political activity had been directed towards the ideals of humanity, fraternity and justice. Germany's long accumulated

hatred and envy burst out with such brutality, that England has at last awakened from her dream of idealism. That is the fundamental fact: she believes once more in the Devil.

And so, not only has the will arisen to put the machine of defence together, but England, now warned, will doubtless never suffer those who planned and attempted the destruction of her Empire to recover the positions they held on the planet, and return to the attempt to conquer world dominion;—no, their ambition to evict England in order to reign alone, has been too manifest. An end to big German armaments!—and if the fleet, which lurks at Kiel, remain in existence, and in the hands of Germany, then three British keels on the stocks for every German keel; and probably a decision as soon as possible. Did we not learn, in September 1915, that, during the first fourteen months of this war, Britain had been able to launch fourteen new dreadnoughts? England, perplexed when outside her traditions, is well within them when dealing with naval matters. We recall, too, her patient, almost invisible effort against the submarines, which were to bring her to her knees—and her silent success. Already the superiority of her fleet has inflicted on the enemy losses that probably more than counterbalance Germany's conquests in Europe—the loss of her sea traffic and of her colonies. Such facts throw a light on "the future of Germany on the seas." The check must be fatal to a nation that has so rapidly evolved from the agricultural to the industrial type, and whose numbers, growing out

of all proportion to the resources of her soil, must command, if they are to live, the markets of the world. Against such an enemy as the war has revealed Germany to be, the old liberal precept, *Live and let live*, is no longer valid. You can no longer allow the growth of a rival who has made up his mind to grow at the expense of your own life and who has already attempted to carry out his murderous intention.

The English war-machine goes on putting itself together, and this is the most formidable of all facts for Germany, who is reaching the limit of her effort. She is, of course, still capable of causing great havoc, but everywhere she shows signs of exhaustion. The human fuel that feeds her machine is diminishing at a terrible rate, and its quality is getting worse: one can forecast the time when it will begin to run short. Meanwhile, England's power is only just being organised—in silence: a silence more ominous, for any one who knows her, than all the German hymns and yells of hatred. The fourth million of men is now being raised. No doubt Lord Derby's system must have seemed queer, ridiculous, '*amateurisch*' to the German professionals. But what do they think of its success? At a moment, when four-fifths of their wounded have to go back to the front, and the German people are talking of nothing but peace and believe themselves at the end of the war—with what feelings do they view the five hundred thousand fresh volunteers who have enlisted in three days, the crowds besieging, in the sixteenth

month of the war, the recruiting offices, the rows and rows of men waiting until two or three o'clock in the morning for their turn to raise their hands and take, by fives and tens at a time, the military oath? Finally, for these masters of Germany, to whom England is gradually revealing herself, of what omen is the new conscription law? Two thousand five hundred factories are preparing, said Lord Kitchener, munitions for six million men in the spring; the State is spending five million pounds every day on the war, raising much of it by taxation. England's power is being manifested indeed —a power that we had felt latent and diffused in town and country, that is being organised day by day into a thorough and strictly ordered fighting force.

And constant efforts are being made to concentrate this force with a view to greater efficiency, to bring it under the control of a few competent, strong men who can ensure its swift employment. The Coalition Government, which exists only for the conduct of the war, is composed of twenty-two members. Too many! The English believe—not a new idea for a people of merchants and manufacturers—that no business can be properly conducted with a large board of directors; that, as we have seen in the case of Lord Derby's scheme, the proper condition of success is to have a small number of chiefs free to decide and responsible for their decisions. For the management of the war, a Cabinet of twenty-two political men reminds one too much of a debating club where discussion never ends in action.

Its numbers have not yet been reduced as the Conservatives advocate. But a committee of five Ministers, dealing specially with the war, has been formed as a preliminary, perhaps, to the more complete reform which some desire and which would place two or three energetic men at the head of things: the idea of a Dictator has even been mooted. At the same time, in order to advise on technical operations, the General Army Staff, which has long been but a memory, has been re-established at the War Office, where it acts in collaboration with the naval experts. No more improvisations, no more freaks such as those with which Mr. Winston Churchill has been so much reproached: the *happy-go-lucky* system is now out of favour; the old faith in chance has gone. Method, organisation, foresight, swift and co-ordinated action, are now the order of the day, not only at the top of the ladder but throughout the administration. The Englishman has conscientiously compared himself in military matters with the German, whom he despises: he has come to the conclusion that the German wages war like a professional, and that he himself has too long played the part of an amateur.

Most important of all is the fact that this criticism, repeated every day by journals and magazines, does not limit itself to matters military. It is being applied to everything, being directed against all those national methods of action and thought which hitherto have made this people so different from all others, but which in this crisis are discovered to be causes of practical inferiority.

The whole social system of England is now questioned: the principle of individualism, the faith in the powers of *laisser faire* and the mutual self-adjustment of things by spontaneous development, the worship of precedent and tradition. New methods of education are being considered which will not sacrifice intellectual culture, nor the equipment of the mind to the aristocratic and puritan ideals of physical perfection, of character and conduct. A new type of Englishman is being called for—the man of disciplined intellect, more scientific and specialised, better armed, in short, for life struggle between the nations. This is the sort of change, a real transmutation of values, which is likely to take place. It had already been anticipated before the war, for which Mr. Wells had not waited when he proclaimed this ideal; attentive students of English life and society had noticed that the mind and the appearance of the average Englishman were becoming less insular. The change cannot but be hastened by the war, which drills millions of young men into military habits and ideas, and by universal service—a sure solvent of the old caste prejudices. As a whole, the result will be the substitution of rational thought for instinct, of conscious and systematic activities for the spontaneous processes of vital evolution.

The change can surely not be limited to the individual; the nation will organise herself morally and politically, concentrating and intensifying her consciousness of self—developing, one may say, a British form of nationalism. In sheer self-defence,

the State will, at least for a time, evolve, like the individual, in the direction of what Herbert Spencer called the "military type"; and it is to be feared that the new yearning for discipline and central authority will be satisfied at the expense of the old principles of liberalism. Already one of these —the least to be regretted—seems condemned: England will no longer leave her markets open to the invasions of her rival. Protective barriers, diminishing in height as they are directed against enemy, neutral or Ally, are being contemplated. This will be the end of that system which, by reason of the start she had in the industrial race between the nations, England was able to establish half a century ago, and which she has strangely persisted in maintaining at a time when every other nation surrounds herself with fences, and sometimes forges weapons of attack for economic war. The Empire, whose unity has been asserted by the enthusiastic loyalty of all its peoples, by the heroic and spontaneous sacrifice of so many men, will surely become more closely bound together. It is proposed to make it an isolated whole by a system of tariffs such as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain advocated after the Boer War: nay, to unite it into a political federation, with an Imperial Parliament in which all the Colonies and Dominions would be represented. After sharing so spontaneously in the effort of the Mother Country, after the free sacrifice of their own blood (never will the Canadians of Ypres and the men of Anzac be forgotten), these new nations form with her henceforth but one people and must decide their future together. To

become more individual, and yet at the same time to conform to a general type, is characteristic nowadays of all human communities. England will lose a great deal of all that made for her intense colour and the unique figure she presented to the world. All her peculiar forms and aspects which the process of life had gradually evolved and accumulated in the course of a long history will the more quickly vanish and fade in the universal grey of the rational. All allowances made, her evolution may be compared to that of Japan, and will be due to the same inevitable law—the law which commands adjustment to the changes of the outer world, with no alternative but decay and death.

All the same, organic and primitive characteristics still persist, will perhaps always persist under the new forms, and Germany was blind when she invented that most fatal of all her psychological mistakes: her theory of English decadence. It may perhaps be said that England, having grown rich, had become less industrious in business, that she was too much inclined to rely on her habits and her delusive position of security. But from decadence the English are much further removed than the Germans, if it be only for the fact that their culture is much more ethical and less intellectual, tending always to create those strong associations of feeling, belief and will which constitute character and make for moral staying power. In the gentry and the upper middle class especially, the education of the youth, carried on for the most part in the open air, seems to be directed to the

one object of securing for life moral and nervous strength and balance. More than any other, indeed, this people has preserved the sense and the religion of moral and physical health. This it shows in its contempt for emotion (which it condemns as morbid), in its respect for its own traditions, and in its secret delight in effort. What are the very games of its youth but a long training in self-control? Such characteristics, and even those others most open to criticism—subserviency to custom, imperviousness to foreign influence and suggestion, and even a certain stolidity of feeling and intellect—such characteristics are psychologically the very negation of degeneracy.

But beyond all their specific traits is their old dumb ingrained determination, in any fight that affects their self-respect, not to be beaten; the dogged will—more silent as it is roused—to fight on with clenched teeth to a victorious finish in spite of all blows and all rebuffs; the stubborn, mute refusal to recognise a master. This pride is latent, generally not conscious of itself. But it is basic, and other nations have never mistaken it. It is at the root of several features which the foreigner looks upon as peculiarly English, and above all, of the Englishman's deliberate reticence and impassivity. Doubtless, such discipline is founded on ethical and social principle, and signifies the deliberate idea to keep one's balance and self-control, the refusal to yield to, and to spread, waves of emotion. But at the same time an Englishman will not confess that he is up against anything like a big proposition, and if an effort must be made,

the main effort is to conceal that effort. And the contradiction is but apparent when, in face of danger, they speak out the truth, confess and clearly proclaim the peril; for this is only done when, as in the present circumstances, the threat is to the community, and it has become necessary to spread the idea of danger among all. Their pessimism is but external and expresses the inner optimism of a secret conviction; they speak aloud of German strength and English inefficiency, because at heart they have no doubt of the English will—a will which they feel nothing can unnerve. Precisely this same idea we have already detected in the *muddling-through* method: remissness, lack of methodical preparation for an effort, because whatever may happen, an Englishman at bottom relies on himself, on the power he feels within him of holding out and ever beginning afresh.

For the two observers who have probably penetrated more deeply than any other into the soul of this people, for both Mr. Kipling and Mr. Galsworthy, this is the bed-rock of the national soul. And therein lies one of the great factors of the future—truly formidable for those who thought to master a degenerate England by fears of Zeppelins and submarines—the more formidable because England, to-day, is fighting not only for herself but for her faith in a law higher than human laws, for her English religion of the absolute distinction between right and wrong—fighting to prevent the upset and confusion of her moral universe which must follow the triumph of crime on this earth. When such force of will is kindled by

such an ideal, it is not only of infinite tenacity, it grows with resistance. We can follow the action of its slow, increasing pressure. Germany was already gasping in the grip of the blockade. We see her shudder in the midst of her victories, as she feels the cold and paralysing clutch close on her ever more relentlessly.

December 1915.

APPENDICES

A

(p. 106)

THE following verses are extracted from a volume of poems entitled *Marlborough*, published after the death of Charles Hamilton Sorley, a student of Cambridge, killed in action, at the age of twenty, on October 13, 1915. They were written at the moment when the young volunteer was about to start for the seat of war in France, in the month of May of the same year. Like those of Rupert Brooke and of Julian Grenfell, they express the lyrical fervour of the moral and religious feeling which inspired so many young men to enlist.

EXPECTANS EXPECTAVI

"From morn to midnight, all day through,
I laugh and play as others do
I sin and chatter, just the same;
As others with a different name.

And all year long upon the stage,
I dance and tumble and do rage
So vehemently, I scarcely see
The inner and eternal me.

I have a temple I do not
Visit, a heart I have forgot,
A self that I have never met,
A secret shrine—and yet, and yet

This sanctuary of my soul
Unwittingly I keep white and whole,
Unlatched and lit, if Thou shouldst care
To enter or to tarry there.

With parted lips and outstretched hands
And listening ears, Thy servant stands;
Call Thou early, call Thou late,
To Thy great service dedicate.[12]

B

(p. 121)

As illustrations of the two chapters, *The Appeal to Conscience* and *The Men*, I may be permitted to quote a few extracts from a letter written to me (January 31st, 1916) by Mr. H. A. Roberts, a member of the University of Cambridge.

"Your comparison between the spiritual operation which induces our men to enlist and a religious conversion appears to me very striking. It really is extraordinarily close, both in the coming forward of the recruit in public (though many more sneak away and go quietly to the recruiting office) and in the working of the mind in quiet which precedes a man's joining the army. Who should know but I, who have been Father Confessor in a sense to so many of these lads, who have brought me their difficulties, their poverty often, and the affairs of their families, in which they were the potential breadwinners, to talk over, not knowing what to do, and unhappy because they hadn't taken the

step; though *here*, of course, they were protected from pressure to a great extent. These lads are, of course, the class of student who come from poor homes; for you don't need reminding that Cambridge nowadays draws from all classes. After all, when the thing was *put* to you as a decision, on a matter to which you haven't hitherto given a moment's thought, never having been taught that war could ever possibly come near you, and not as a thing settled before you were born, what a decision it was! All that doesn't mean that I don't like the French way best, because I do. But I'm much interested in my country just now, and cheered also about it.

". . . Of course, the volunteering business did much to make the discipline sweet at first; if you haven't an army a going concern, and have to improvise, I doubt if there's a better way *to begin:* a man who wants to fight the Germans isn't likely to begin by kicking his sergeant.

". . . I was much pleased with what you had to say on the aspect of the new armies. I never realised before that the English were so handsome a race. And, as you say, they are gentlemen—almost all, that is.

". . . They are like Cromwell's soldiers, 'with a goodwill to the work,' or rather they are Crusaders, for the most of them—having never thought profoundly—do not really realise the danger to England. But the crimes of Germany against civilisation, her brutality in France and her bestiality in Belgium, *that* they know all about, and it hurts them.

"I was struck by the matter-of-fact, quiet way in which these lads turned from all their old lives just to take up arms. No enthusiasm, no excitement. The day after war was declared there was a partial eclipse of the sun, and you would have said, walking down the street in the pale sunlight, that England was a country of dumb people. We knew the big thing had come; it was too big to shout about. These boys have indeed taken away the best of England with them.

"The queer thing is that, in spite of their composition, the new armies are so professionally keen that they have positively taken over the very slang of the old—the ways and jokes of the soldier—that they may in no way differ. You know their song, of course?

> "Send out the lads of the Boys' Brigade,[1]
> They shall keep Old England free;
> Send out my brother, my sister, my mother,
> But for Gawd's sake don't send me!"

"Now, what does the Hun make of it, if he reads that they sing that?

"And they call our dear country 'Old Blighty.'

"Did you read in the papers the delicious story of the sing-song in billets? How the officer in charge left the sing-song for a few minutes—they had some German prisoners there—when he came back what he heard was this: 'Order, gentlemen, please; our friends 'Ans and Fritz will now oblige with the *y'mn of 'ate!*'"

[1] A kind of inferior Boy Scout affair.

C

(p. 152)

In his speech on the increase of production of munitions (House of Commons, December 20, 1915), Mr. Lloyd George stated that the War Office "had arrived a little late" at the conclusion that shrapnel was not enough for the trench warfare, and that a greater number of high explosive shells were necessary. He added—

"Now I will give the House an indication of the leeway we had to make up. The Germans at that time were turning out about 250,000 shells per day, the vast majority of them being high-explosives. That is a prodigious figure. The French have also been highly successful in the quantities which they have been turning out. But they have great armies, and their arsenals which were turning out the materials of war for their army were naturally on a larger scale than ours. Our large arsenals naturally took a naval turn, and the bulk of the engineers who were turning out munitions of war were engaged on naval work, so that in the month of May, when the Germans were turning out 250,000 shells a day, most of them high-explosives, we were turning out 2,500 a day in high-explosives and 13,000 in shrapnel."

The chief difficulties, said the minister, arose from the lack of special machinery, from the scarcity of labour, from the irregular supply of raw material, and from the shipping crisis.

He explained the means by which these diffi-

culties were met. The chief were the creation of forty local munitions committees, including the great manufacturers of metal-working machines in each district, in order to organise the transformation and equipment of the factories for the production of war material. At the head, in attendance on the minister, was a council of business men and eminent engineers, specialists borrowed from the great private firms and companies. Some of them were commissioned to inspect the work of production in the provinces and in Canada, and to make inquiries into the difficulties of each establishment. Without giving actual figures, Mr. Lloyd George indicated roughly the progress made by pointing out the abundance of munitions available at the Battle of Loos in September. Although this battle lasted several weeks, and the daily expenditure of shells was enormous, they never ran short. We were able, added the minister, to replace this amount of munitions in a month, and we shall soon be in a position to produce as much in a week.

The cost of the shells diminished between May and December, thanks to the new organisation, by from forty to thirty per cent. according to the kind of shell.

D

(p. 181)

On January 26 and 27, 1916, the Labour Conference, consisting of delegates from the trade unions, representatives of the Socialist bodies, of

the Trades Union Central Committee, and of the Parliamentary Labour Committee, representing 2,205,000 members, passed the following resolutions. By a majority of 900,000 votes it "approved" of the war and undertook "to aid the Government to conduct it to the end." By a majority of 1,641,000 votes it affirmed its approval of the part taken by the Labour Party in the recruiting campaign (the minority represents the Independent Labour Party, which refused to take part in it). By a majority of 1,577,000 votes it voted against "any form of conscription as being contrary to the spirit of democracy." By a majority of 1,456,000 votes it voted against the conscription law, which had just been passed by Parliament. But whilst the representatives of 600,000 miners abstained, it decided by 649,000 votes to 614,000 not to agitate against the new law.

To understand these votes it must not be forgotten that we are not here dealing with a referendum, but that the conference was composed of leaders and representatives—of those who think for the party. As we have said, many of them voted by virtue of credentials somewhat old, so that at the Trade Union Congress, held in London on January 8, 1916, where the majority voted against the principle of compulsory service, the Labour members of the Cabinet (Messrs. Henderson, Brace and Roberts) were able to challenge the members of Parliament who led this majority to resign and attempt re-election by their constituents. The latter had more than once disavowed them before the Conference of the 26th. (Take, for example, the protest

of the engineers of Hartlepool against the vote of the delegates of their union at the congress of January 8.) The political theorists of the party speak and demonstrate, but as one of them, Mr. G. H. Roberts, M.P., said at the conference, " they would not take the responsibility of actually refusing the men demanded by the military experts." Opponents of the law, like Mr. Will Thorne and Mr. F. S. Bulton, acknowledged plainly, at the same meeting, that the law could not be resisted by strikes, and that the workmen would refuse to take part in them if they were ordered.

E

(p. 205)

Since the first publication (in French) of these pages the House of Commons has approved by an enormous majority the Conscription Bill, introduced on January 4 by Mr. Asquith. As we predicted, everything was done to attenuate and disguise the revolutionary nature of the measure. It is partial, referring only to unmarried men and widowers without children. The principle of recruiting the army by voluntary enlistment is still affirmed in the text of the measure which introduces compulsory service, for the bill declares that these men " will be held to have enlisted according to Lord Derby's system." What we said of the strength, in England, of the idea that conscience is inviolable, and of the part it played in the minds of many anti-conscriptionists, is borne out by the

clause of the Act which dispenses from armed service every man who declares that he objects to it from conscientious motives. (Special tribunals examine the sincerity of the conscientious objectors, and the grounds for other exemptions.)

Mr. Asquith felt justified in saying when he introduced the bill: "The measure which I am introducing can be perfectly well supported by those whose principles are opposed to conscription." The idea is still that of a moral obligation. What is attempted is to stimulate, and then to compel the minority which has not done its duty, to do it. This is why, after Lord Derby's lists had been declared closed, they were reopened, so that the unmarried men aimed at by the law (on January 5, 650,000 of them had not yet presented themselves) might have, to the last moment, the opportunity of enlisting as volunteers, that is to say, of putting themselves on the same footing as those who had enlisted before them, and joining the army without discredit. In February the last appeal was posted on the walls—

> "*Will you march too,*
> *Or will you wait till March two?*"[11]

It was with reference to these new delays that Mr. Asquith defended his proposed legislation, by saying that there would possibly be no need to put it into operation.

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